THE ISLAMIC OPENINGS

(Al-Fatuhât Al-Islâmiyah)

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THE ISLAMIC OPENINGS

(Al-Fatu<u>h</u>ât Al-Islâmiyah)

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NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION

We have rejected the traditional translation of *fataha* as "conquered" in favor of "opened". Thus the English title of this book is *The Islamic Openings* rather than *The Islamic Conquests*. In the military context, *fataha* is usually applied only to the actions of the Muslims in bringing Islamic rule to other lands. They opened those lands to Islam, inviting but not forcing the native people to join Islam. But when other powers conquered other nations, they did not open them, and another verb in Arabic is used for their conquests.

Jizyah was imposed on every non-Muslim who kept his religion. It was taken as a payment for protecting the city or country. The amount was assigned according to the financial status of the people, and it was not collected from young children, women, old men or the poor.

This book contains many place names and personal names that are unfamiliar to the modern reader. Arabic does not write the vowels, thus making transliteration of these names difficult. Most of these names are not Arabic, so the translator cannot use Arabic morphology to determine the vowels. We have attempted to find these names in other books with limited success. Where possible, the English form of the name is used if it is likely to be familiar to the reader, but in most cases the place names herein are uncertain.

A simplified spelling for Arabic names is used throughout and the long vowels are not indicated. The character ' represents the Arabic *hamza* and ` represents the Arabic *`ain*.

The character ﷺ is the Arabic words *sallâ Allâhu `alaihi wa sallam* meaning "Blessings and peace of Allah be upon him."

THE OPENING OF MAKKAH

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A Word about the Treaty of Hudaibiyah

When the Prophet ﷺ made a treaty with the Quraish in the year of Hudaibiyah, which was 6 A.H., the agreement was based on a period of truce.

> The one who would like to be allegiant to Muhammad is welcomed and the one who would like to be allegiant to the Quraish is free to do so. The one who goes to the Quraish from the supporters of the Prophet is not to be rejected by them, and the one who goes to the Prophet from the Quraish or from their allies is to be with the Prophet.

The members of the tribe of Kananah who were present stood up and said, "We will be with the Quraish and their agreement."

The tribe of Khuza`ah stood and said, "We will be on the side of Muhammad and his agreement."

There had been an old alliance between `Abdul Muttalib ibn Hashim, the Prophet's grandfather, and the tribe of Khuza`ah. Thus, `Amr ibn Salim ibn Hassirah of the Khuza`ah said, "It is not strange that I chose Muhammad, for it is the alliance set between my father and his grandfather."

Then a man of the Khuza`ah heard another man of the Kananah reciting a defamatory poem about the Prophet ﷺ, the possessor of the most dignified merits. He attacked and injured him. This incident kindled the hatred and fighting between the two tribes.

The Quraish sided with the Kananah and some of them went in disguise to take revenge. Among them were Safwan ibn Umaiyah, Huwaitib ibn `Abdul `Uzza, `Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, Shaibah ibn `Uthman and Suhail ibn `Amr. They pretended to have no knowledge of the accord.

They attacked the Khuza`ah at night while they were sleeping and killed many men in violation of the treaty.

Then `Amr ibn Salim of the Khuza`ah went to the Prophet ﷺ asking for his help. This forced the Prophet ﷺ to conquer Makkah.

The Quraish were afraid that the Prophet ﷺ would learn of their support of the tribe of Banu Bakr, for it was a clear breach of their treaty and could provoke the Muslims and cause them to invade Makkah.

Regretting what they had done, they sent Abu Sufyan ibn Harb to the Prophet ﷺ to renew the

agreement and prolong the period of truce. However, the Prophet ﷺ did not answer his plea.

The Prophet Orders the Muslims to Prepare

It was the habit of the Prophet ﷺ that whenever he wanted to raid somewhere, he would mention a destination other than the planned one.

So when he intended to fight the people of Makkah, he ordered the Muslims to prepare themselves for a battle and hid the destination from them.

He sent to the Bedouins and all the Muslims that were living in the surroundings: "He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter is to spend Ramadan in Madinah."

So the Arab tribes of Aslam, Ghifar, Muzainah, Ashja` and Juhainah complied and came to Madinah.

When the Muslims were ready, the Prophet ﷺ announced that he was heading to Makkah. Then he said, "O Allah, blind the Quraish from any spies or news till we take them by surprise in their ears and eyes so that they see us suddenly and hear us without any previous knowledge."

He assigned a group for every route to know who was passing by and he told them, "Don't let anyone that you don't know pass by you but send him back."

Hatib ibn Abi Balta`ah's Message to the Leaders of Makkah

The Companion Hatib ibn Abi Balta`ah thought that he had better send to the leaders of Makkah - Suhail ibn `Amr, Sufyan ibn Umaiyah, `Ikremah ibn Abi Jahl and Huwaitib ibn `Abdul `Uzza - a message that the Prophet ﷺ was marching towards Makkah. He told them, "Allah's Messenger has marched towards you in a huge army that advances as vigorously as a flood. He

swore by the name of Allah that if he marched on it all by himself, Allah would grant him victory over you, for He will fulfil what He has promised the Prophet to do to you, for Almighty Allah is his Protector and Guardian. Hence, I preferred to do you a favor by writing to you."

Hatib ibn Abi Balta`ah thought about the person through whom he could send the message to the chiefs of the Quraish. He remembered Sarah, a slave of some people of Banu `Abdul Muttalib.

She was a singer in Makkah who came to Madinah asking the Prophet ﷺ for charity, for she complained of being needy. The Prophet of mercy ﷺ urged Banu `Abdul Muttalib to be benevolent to her, so they gave her clothes, money and provisions.

Hatib trusted Sarah, so he gave her the message and ten dinars, which contented her. She carried his message and headed to Makkah, happy

with what she took from him and with an eye on the generous reward awaiting her when she delivered the message to the chiefs of the Quraish.

However, the divine inspiration told the Prophet ﷺ about Hatib's message before Sarah's camel reached Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ told `Ali ibn Abi Talib, Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam and Al-Miqdad ibn `Amr, "Go ahead till you reach the garden of Khakh (a place between Makkah and Madinah). You will find a woman on a camel who has a message from Hatib ibn Abi Balta`ah to the unbelievers warning them of our arrangements to attack them. Take the message from her and set her free, but if she refuses (to give the message), kill her."

They went on their way and reached the place where Sarah was.

They said to her, "Where's the message?"

She said, "I have no message."

"Either you bring it out or throw the baggage off the camel."

She swore by the name of Allah that she had no message. They brought her down from her mount and searched her and her baggage, but they did not find anything. `Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "By Allah, Allah's Prophet never told a lie, nor did we say a false thing. Bring out the message or we will strip you or kill you."

When `Ali turned his back, she loosened the braids of her hair and brought the message out from them. He took the message and returned to Madinah followed by Al-Zubair and Al-Miqdad.

When `Ali delivered the message to the Prophet ﷺ, he sent to Hatib ibn Balta`ah and asked him, "What is this, Hatib?"

Hatib said, "Don't be quick to judge me, Messenger of Allah!"

"Why did you do this, Hatib?"

"Messenger of Allah, I'm a stranger to the Quraish and not of their kin, while the Muhajirun (Immigrants) who accompany you have relations by which they protect their relatives and wealth in Makkah. So I thought that since I don't have any kinship with the Quraish, I could do them a favor so that they would have a reason to protect my family.

"I did this neither out of disbelief nor apostasy, nor did I accept disbelief."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "He spoke the truth."

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab said, "Messenger of Allah, allow me to kill this hypocrite."

The Prophet said, "He has witnessed the Battle of Badr. Who knows? Perhaps Allah has overlooked the wrongs of the people who fought in Badr and said, 'Do whatever you like for I have forgiven you. You are destined to Paradise.'"

Then the verse was revealed to the Prophet:

❮ "O you who believe! Do not take My enemies and yours for friends, offering them friendship, while they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, and expelling the Messenger and you only because you believe in Allah your Lord. If you go forth to strive in My cause and seeking My good pleasure, *(take them not as friends)* holding secret converse of friendship with them, while I am best aware of what you hide and what you reveal, and whoever of you does that, has truly gone astray from the Right Path." If they have the upper hand over you, they will be your enemies, and will stretch out their hands and their tongues towards you with evil intent, and they wish that you may disbelieve.❯

(Al-Mumtahanah 60: 1 – 2)

The Islam of Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith

The Prophet who was sent to all humanity ﷺ marched with his army from Madinah on 10 Ramadan 8 A.H. with ten thousand Muslim men. He left Abarahum Kultum ibn Al-Hassin ibn Khalaf Al-Ghifari in charge of Madinah. They were fasting, but on their way, the Prophet of mercy ﷺ ordered his companions to break their fast to make things easier and to relieve them.

On their way to Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ met his uncle Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib. "You are the last of the Muhajirun and I am the last Prophet," he said to his uncle. Then the Prophet ﷺ ordered him to send his baggage to Madinah and to accompany him to Makkah.

The Muslim army was intercepted by Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith, who used to harm the Prophet with his poetry and his sword. With him were his son Ja`far and `Abdullah ibn Abi Umaiyah ibn Al-Mughirah, the son of the

Prophet's aunt `Atikah bint `Abdul Muttalib and the brother of the Mother of the Believers Umm Salamah.

`Abdullah ibn Abi Umaiyah went to his sister Umm Salamah and said to her, "O Mother of the Believers, ask the Prophet to pardon us." So she said to the Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah, your uncle's son and your aunt's son and your brother-in-law should not be wretched though they are your relatives." The Prophet ﷺ turned away from them and said, "I'm in no need of them, for my uncle's son disgraced me, and my aunt's son and brother-in-law is the one who has said such nonsense in Makkah."

On hearing these words of the Prophet, Abu Sufyan said, "By Allah, if he does not give me permission to see him, I will take my son and go away so that he can't know where I am." And then Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith saw `Ali ibn Abi Talib who, also being his cousin, told him, "Go to the Messenger of Allah and stand in front of his face

and tell him what the brothers of Yusuf said to him. They said, ❴'By Allah now Allah has certainly preferred you above us, and we certainly have been guilty of sin.'❵ (Yusuf 12: 91)"

Abu Sufyan went to the Prophet accompanied by his son Ja`far and `Abdullah ibn Abi Umaiyah. The Prophet ﷺ turned his face away from them. On seeing this, Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith changed his position to face the Prophet at the other side, but the Prophet turned his face away again, so Abu Sufyan recited verse 91 from Surah Yusuf. Then the Prophet who was sent with mercy to all humanity ﷺ was moved and recited from the verse after it: ❴... "No reproach shall this day be upon you, and Allah will forgive you, He is the Most Merciful of those who have mercy."❵

(Yusuf 12: 92)

Abu Sufyan, his son Ja`far and `Abdullah ibn Umaiyah said, "We bear witness that there is no

god but Allah and we bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

And then Abu Sufyan recited a couple of his poetic verses in which he said that the day he held a banner of war so that the armies of the pagans would defeat those of Muhammad he was bewildered in darkness. But now he is guided to the truth by someone who changed his soul and directed him to the truth although he had coerced and opposed him severely.

The Prophet ﷺ tapped his chest and said, "You drove me out." Abu Sufyan lowered his head in embarrassment, feeling guilty. The Prophet ﷺ said, "`Ali, teach your cousin how to make ablution and let him know what the Sunnah is, then bring him back to me."

Then `Ali ibn Abi Talib went out with his cousin Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith. The Prophet ﷺ called to `Ali, "Announce to the people that Allah's Prophet is pleased with Abu Sufyan ibn

Al-Harith, so they should be pleased with him as well."

The Islam of Abu Sufyan ibn Harb

In the city of Qadid, the Prophet arranged the troops and assigned the standards, dividing them among the tribes.

When he camped at Murr Al-Dhahran, he ordered his companions to kindle ten thousand fires and charged `Umar ibn Al-Khattab to guard them. The Quraish had no news of the Prophet's approach, so he ﷺ said, "In Makkah, there are four persons of the Quraish whom I hate to see in disbelief, and I want them in Islam. They are `Itab ibn Usaid, Jubair ibn Mut`am, Hakim ibn Hizam and Suhail ibn `Amr."

Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib felt sorry for the people of Makkah and said to himself, "What a miserable morning awaits the Quraish! By Allah, if Allah's Messenger enters Makkah by

force before they come to negotiate with him, it will be fatal for the Quraish for ever after."

He rode the Prophet's white mule and moved on in the light of the flickering fires till he reached a vast area before Makkah where the *arak* plant grows. He said, "Perhaps I can find some woodcutters or dairymen or anyone running an errand who can go to Makkah and tell them where the Prophet's camp is so they can go to him and settle a treaty of safety with him before he enters by force."

However, the Quraish knew about the Prophet's approach, though they did not know from which direction. They were shaking with fear after violating the treaty and after the failure of Abu Sufyan ibn Harb to prolong the truce and renew the agreement not to invade them.

They sent Abu Sufyan ibn Harb to see what was going on, and they said to him, "If you meet

Muhammad, take a word of safety from him for us."

Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, Hakim ibn Hizam and Badil ibn Warqa' Al- Khuza`i set on their way aiming to bring news about the Prophet from a distance. They saw the flames and heard the neighing of horses.

Astonished, Abu Sufyan ibn Harb said, "I've never seen such fire or armies. This is the fire of the tribe of Arafah."

Hakim ibn Hizam said, "By Allah, this must be the Khuza`ah enraged by war."

Astonished as he was, Abu Sufyan replied, "The Khuza`ah are more humble and less in number to have such fires and armies."

Suddenly, a loud voice broke the calmness of the night saying, "O Abu Hanzhalah!" Abu Sufyan turned towards the direction of the voice,

which was that of his friend and comrade Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib.

"Is that you, Abul Fadl?"

"Yes!" replied Al-`Abbas.

Abu Hanzhalah said, "What's wrong, my most beloved friend?"

"By Allah, this is Allah's Prophet together with many people and he has decided on things that you cannot endure."

Abu Sufyan said desperately, "Oh, what a doomed morning is waiting for the Quraish! What shall we do?"

"Certainly, if he seizes power over you he will kill you. Get on the back of this mule till I take you to Allah's Messenger, where I can ask him to secure you."

The chief of the Quraish rode behind the Prophet's uncle while Hakim ibn Hizam and Badil ibn Warqa' Al-Khuza`i returned to Makkah.

Abul Fadl brought Abu Sufyan, and whenever they passed by one of the fires, the Muslims said on seeing them, "The uncle of the Prophet is on his mule." When they passed by the fire of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who was on guard, he asked, "Who's there?" Then he approached Al-`Abbas and when he saw Abu Sufyan ibn Harb on the back of the mule, he said, "Abu Sufyan! The enemy of Allah! All praise to Allah Who gave us power over you with no treaty or covenant."

Then `Umar dragged Abu Sufyan to where the Prophet ﷺ was. The mule ran fast ahead of `Umar. Al-`Abbas was racing with `Umar to reach the Prophet first, for `Umar was aiming to take the Prophet's permission to kill Allah's enemy, Abu Sufyan ibn Harb.

Al-`Abbas entered upon the Prophet followed by `Umar Al-Faruq, who said breathlessly, "This is Abu Sufyan, whom Allah has given us power over without a treaty or covenant, so allow me to kill him."

Al-`Abbas looked at `Umar disapprovingly then turned towards the Messenger of Allah and said, "Messenger of Allah, I promised him safety." Then he sat down.

`Umar repeated his demand, "Let me behead him."

Abul Fadl said angrily, "Wait `Umar, for, by Allah, if he were one of the men of `Udai ibn Ka`b, you would not have said that. However, you know that he belongs to the tribe of `Abdul Manaf."

`Umar said, "Take it easy, `Abbas. By Allah, your embrace of Islam the day you announced it was more precious to me than the Islam of Al-

Khattab if he had ever embraced it because I knew that your embrace of Islam was more precious to Allah's Messenger ﷺ than the Islam of Al-Khattab, if he had ever embraced it."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Take him to your tent, `Abbas, and when it is morning, bring him to me."

Al-`Abbas returned to his tent and the next morning the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions made ablution.

Abu Hanzhalah said, "Oh `Abbas! I've never seen such sovereignty before, not even the sovereignty of Persia or Byzantine."

When the Companions of the Prophet gathered to pray, Abu Sufyan wondered, "What are they up to? Were they ordered to do something?"

Al-`Abbas answered him, "They heard the *adhan* for prayer. That's why they're gathering."

On seeing the Muslims bow and prostrate like the Prophet, Abu Sufyan said, "`Abbas! They do whatever he orders them to do."

"Certainly. and by Allah, if he orders them to abstain from food and drink they will comply."

Al-`Abbas then took Abu Hanzhalah to the Prophet of mercy ﷺ, who said, "Woe to you, Abu Sufyan! Isn't it high time that you knew that there is no god but Allah?" Abu Sufyan ibn Harb said, "You are worth my father and mother to me, for you are so patient, so generous, and so merciful. I thought that if there were another god with Allah I would not be in need of anything."

The Prophet ﷺ asked him, "Woe to you, Abu Sufyan! Isn't it high time that you knew I am the messenger of Allah?"

If Abu Hanzhalah admitted his belief in the Prophet, he would lose the leadership and authority that he had struggled for years to gain.

He said, "I still have doubts in my soul about that."

Abu Sufyan sought to postpone his admission of the Prophet's prophethood, for he realized how patient and tolerant he was. Abu Sufyan thought that no one could foretell the future. Perhaps one day, circumstances would overthrow Islam and the Muslims, and then he would be able to enjoy his supremacy over his people and save his dignity among them.

Noticing the glances of `Umar ibn Khattab, Abul Fadl said to his friend and comrade, "Woe to you! Declare your faith and admit that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger before your head is cut off."

His head was more precious to him than all honors and leadership, and `Umar was determined to cut it off.

Abu Sufyan said in a broken voice full of sorrow, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger."

Thus, Abu Sufyan's declaration of Islam was a factor that spread peace so that the Muslim army could enter Makkah without resistance.

Allah's Armies Pass before Abu Sufyan

The Muslims prepared to enter Makkah, "The Mother of the Towns". The Prophet ﷺ said to his uncle `Abbas, "Go and hold Abu Sufyan at the narrow path of the valley so that the army of Allah passes by him and he can see them." Al-`Abbas had a good wit and diplomatic speech, so he said, "Messenger of Allah, Abu Sufyan is proud, so give him a privilege over his people."

So the Messenger ﷺ, who had a good understanding of the hearts and souls, said, "He who enters the house of Abu Sufyan is safe. He who enters the house of Hakim ibn Hizam is safe.

He who enters the Sacred Mosque is safe, and he who keeps himself indoors is safe."

Al-`Abbas "Abul Fadl" took Abu Sufyan "Abu Hanzhalah" and confined him at the narrow path of the mountain where the Prophet ordered. As the tribes passed by Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, he wondered, "Who are these?"

Abul Fadl said to him, "Declare your faith."

Abu Sufyan said, "Why should I?" Then he repeated, "Who are these?"

"The tribe of Juhainah."

"What do I have to do with Juhainah?"

Then the tribe of Ghifar passed by and he asked the same question. Afterwards, Sa`d ibn Hadhim passed by, and Abu Sufyan exclaimed as before. Then a select, distinguished brigade passed by.

"Oh, Abul Fadl! Who are these?"

"This is the Messenger of Allah accompanied by the Ansar (Helpers of Madinah)."

"No one can defeat such a group."

He then looked at the green brigade and shook with fear for the Quraish. He was astonished by the great army mustered by the Prophet ﷺ. He turned to Abul Fadl and said, "By Allah, Abul Fadl, your nephew's power has become great!"

"Oh, Abu Sufyan! It's the prophethood."

Sa`d ibn `Ubadah carried the standard of the Prophet, and when he passed by Abu Sufyan, he said to him, "Abu Sufyan! Today is the day of the battle. Today Allah will humiliate the Quraish."

When the Prophet himself ﷺ passed by Abu Sufyan, the latter said, "Messenger of Allah, did you order the murder of your own kinsmen? Sa`d ibn `Ubadah and his company said upon passing by me that he will kill us! Oh, Messenger of

Allah! For the sake of Allah, I beg you to be merciful with your people, for you are the most beneficent, merciful and tender of them all."

`Uthman ibn `Affan and `Abdul Rahman ibn `Auf said, "Messenger of Allah, we do not guarantee that Sa`d will not attack the Quraish."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Abu Sufyan, Sa`d lied. Today is the day of mercy and today Allah will honor the Quraish."

The Prophet of mercy ﷺ sent to Sa`d ibn `Ubadah to have the standard taken from him and given to his son Qais ibn Sa`d ibn `Ubadah. Sa`d refused to hand over the standard except by a clear indication from the Prophet.

The Prophet ﷺ sent him his turban, so Sa`d gave the standard over to his son Qais.

Abu Sufyan ibn Harb Advises His People

Al-`Abbas said to Abu Sufyan, "Advise your people to secure themselves."

Abu Sufyan mounted his horse and dashed to Makkah. On entering, he shouted loudly, "People of the Quraish! Muhammad is coming to you with a tremendous army that you cannot resist. Yet he who enters the house of Abu Sufyan is safe."

His wife Hind bint `Utbah was furious with him. Blinded with rage, she grabbed his beard and cried, "Tribe of Ghalib! Kill the crazy old man!" Then she added, "You're the worst bearer of tidings." People rushed to her and she said, "Will you fight to defend yourselves and your city?"

Abu Sufyan said sharply, "Shut up and go in your house!" Then he looked at the people and said, "Woe to you! Don't be deceived by her. He has come with a mighty army that you cannot confront. He who enters the house of Abu Sufyan

is safe, and he who enters the Sacred Mosque is safe, and he who keeps himself indoors is safe."

The people then dispersed.

The Messenger of Allah Enters Makkah

The Prophet ﷺ arrayed the army and its generals and troops and ordered them to meet at Mount Safa and not to fight unless they were attacked first.

The Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah from the north with his head lowered in awe to Allah while reciting Surat Al-Fath. He leaned his head on his camel in humbleness to Allah. He did not enter it as a triumphant blood-thirsty general who violates the people and plunders their property. He advanced with his group till he reached Hujun, where he ordered his standard to be fixed.

The left flank of the army did not face any resistance, but the right flank led by Khalid ibn Al-Walid was confronted by some young men of

the Quraish. They clashed with Khalid's men and threw spears at them, then fled to the mountains and roads. The Prophet ﷺ entered the Sacred Mosque and, starting from the Black Rock, circumambulated the Ka`bah.

Purifying the Ka`bah of the Idols

Three hundred sixty idols - one for each tribe of the Arabs - were set up in the Ka`bah.

They were fixed by lead at the base. The Prophet ﷺ brought a rod and struck every idol till it fell on its face while he recited

> ﴾And say, "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished, indeed falsehood is bound to vanish."﴿

(Isra' 17: 81)

The idol named Hubal remained inside the Ka`bah. When it was night, the Prophet ﷺ said to `Ali ibn Abi Talib, "Get on my shoulders and

destroy the idol." `Ali said, "Messenger of Allah, you get on me, for it is not honorable of me to be over you." The Prophet ﷺ said, "No! You mount."

So the Prophet ﷺ sat down and `Ali got up onto his shoulders. Then the Prophet ﷺ stood up, raising `Ali to the top of the Ka`bah. `Ali managed to move the idol and throw it to the ground, where it broke into pieces.

Abu Sufyan was present and reported that the Prophet ﷺ recited the same verse of the Qur'an as earlier.

Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam looked at Abu Sufyan and said, "So Hubal was destroyed, and on the day of Uhud you were arrogant when you claimed that it is a source of blessing."

Abu Sufyan said, "Leave me alone and don't rebuke me, for if there were another god with the God of Muhammad, things would have been otherwise."

The Messenger of Allah Enters the Ka`bah

After purifying the Ka`bah of idols, pagans and filth, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted to enter it. He sent Bilal ibn Rabah to `Uthman ibn Abi Talhah to bring the key of the Ka`bah. Because it was crammed with idols, statues and pictures, the Prophet ﷺ did not enter it till it was emptied. When it was cleared, he entered and found remains of pictures on its walls. He ordered a bucket of water, threw the water and started to rub out the drawings with his honored hands saying, "May Allah fight the people who draw what they cannot create." (narrated by Tiyalsi and Diya' from Usama ibn Zaid)

The Free

The Prophet ﷺ stood and said, "There is no god but Allah. He has no partner. He has fulfilled His promise, granted victory to His servant and defeated the allies alone.

"People of the Quraish, Allah has purified you from the arrogance of the Period of Ignorance and its flattering with ancestry. People are descended from Adam, and Adam was created out of mud." Then he recited

> ﴾O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.﴿

(Al-Hujurat 49: 13)

The Prophet ﷺ placed his hands on the doorknobs and said, "What do you think I will do to you?"

They said, "Good."

One of them said, "We say it is good and believe it to be good. You are a good brother and a good nephew, though you have power over us."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "I will say to you what my brother Yusuf said: ﴾... "No reproach shall this day be upon you, and Allah will forgive you, He is the Most Merciful of those who have mercy."﴿ (Yusuf 12: 92) Go, you are free."

Providing water for the pilgrims was the responsibility of the tribe of `Abdul Muttalib, and Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul Mutalib was in charge of it. The Prophet ﷺ asked, "Where is `Uthman ibn Abi Talhah?"

`Uthman replied, "At your service, Messenger of Allah!"

The Prophet said, "Take your key, `Uthman, for today is a day of beneficence and fulfillment." Then he gave him the keys and said, "Take the keys, Ibn Abi Talhah, for they will be your

everlasting duty not to be taken except by a transgressor."

Then the responsibility of providing water was given to `Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib.

THE OPENING
OF IRAQ



THE OPENING OF IRAQ

Hirah

After the first caliph, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, had finished fighting the apostates and those who claimed to be prophets - Musailamah the Liar, Al-Aswad Al-Ansi, Tulaihah ibn Khuwailid, Sajah and so forth - he wrote to Khalid ibn Al-Walid ordering him to march towards Iraq.

Thus, in 12 A.H., Khalid ibn Al-Walid "Abu Sulaiman" headed towards Iraq, which was under the emperor of Persia. He rested at Barnqiya, Barusma and Alis, where he made a treaty with its people. Ibn Saluba, the chief of the city, agreed to pay ten thousand dinars other than what Khusraw (the title of the Persian emperor) kept. Every person had to pay four dirhams as *jizyah* to Khalid. Afterwards, Khalid resumed his march till he reached Hirah. There he was received by its chieftains and its governor, Iyas ibn Qubaissah Al-Ta'i, who ruled after Al-Nu`man ibn Al-

Mundhir. Khalid asked them to choose between embracing Islam, paying *jizyah* or fighting. They chose to pay *jizyah*, so he made an agreement for them to pay ninety thousand dirhams.

Thus, this was the first *jizyah* to be taken from the Persians in Islam together with that paid by the cities of Barusma, Barnqiya and Alis, the one negotiated by Ibn Saluba.

The Battle of the Chains

Khalid ibn Al-Walid sent a message to Hurmuz, the ruler of his fortified city and sea: "Embrace Islam so that you will be granted safety, or settle an agreement for yourself and your people and fulfill it through *jizyah*. Otherwise, do not blame anyone but yourself, for I have come to you accompanied by people who love to die exactly as you love to live."

On receiving the message, Hurmuz read it and wrote to Shairi ibn Khusraw and Ardashair

ibn Shairi. Hurmuz assembled his army and put two brothers at the head of its two flanks: Qubadh and Anushijan, sons of Ardashair the Great.

The soldiers put themselves in chains to prevent themselves from running away from the battle.

Hurmuz and his men settled to fight in a land that was near the location of the Persians and where water was available.

On hearing about their march, Khalid ibn Al-Walid proceeded with the Muslims towards the city of Kazhamah, but Hurmuz hurried to it before him. He had a very bad reputation with the Arabs, who were furious with him and made him a model of viciousness with their proverb "More vicious than Hurmuz".

Khalid proceeded and camped at a place without any source of water. His men asked him, "What do you have in mind?"

He replied, "Struggle for water with them, for, by Allah, water is to be the deserve of the two armies."

The Muslims unloaded their burdens and Khalid proceeded towards the Persians and confronted them. Allah, the Most Merciful and Benificent, sent a rain cloud that burst behind the ranks of the Muslims, so they were assured and gained strength.

Hurmuz came forward and called to Khalid, asking him to fight a duel with him. He plotted with his men to betray Khalid. He called aloud, "Where is Khalid?" Khalid showed himself and went towards him on foot. Hurmuz dismounted, too, and they fought a duel. Then Khalid took hold of him and this enraged Hurmuz's guards, who attacked Khalid. Yet, this did not divert Khalid from killing Hurmuz. Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr clashed with Hurmuz's guards till he forced them away from Khalid, who struggled against them.

Finally, the Persians were defeated and the Muslims pursued them till night. Among those who fled were Qubadh and Anushijan. Khalid took the spoils of Hurmuz, whose helmet was inlaid with precious jewels and was worth a hundred thousand dinars.

Khalid sent the spoils and the allotted fifth portion to Abu Bakr. Then he proceeded till he camped at the great bridge in Basrah.

Khalid ordered Al-Muthanna ibn Harith Al-Shaibani to pursue the Persian army, and he sent Ma`qil ibn Muqrin to the city of Abalah, which he opened and took booty and captives.

The Battle of Madhar

Hurmuz had written to his King, Ardashair, requesting reinforcement, so the king supported him with Al-Qarin ibn Qurbans, who left the city of Mada'in and marched to assist Hurmuz. On reaching Al-Madhar, he heard about the defeat of

the Persians and those who fled from the Battle of the Chains, and about Qubadh and Anushijan. The people complained and said, "If you break off, you will never unite again. Agree to go back to fight, for this is the reinforcement of the king and this is Al-Qarin ibn Qurbans. May the gods change our situation, grant us victory over our enemy, make us pleased by their losses and get some of our possessions back from their hands."

They camped at the city of Madhar, and Qarin ibn Qurbans put Qubadh and Anushijan over the two flanks of the army. Al-Muthanna and his brother Al-Ma`ni sent the news to Khalid, who marched with his army till they reached Madhar. They encountered Qarin and his forces, and there was a fierce battle.

Qarin came forward and asked Khalid for a duel. Khalid and the best horseman, Ma`qil ibn Al-A`sha ibn Al-Nabbash, came forward and raced to reach Qarin. Ma`qil outdistanced Khalid, reached Qarin and killed him. `Adi killed Qubadh,

while `Asim killed Anushijan. Many Persians were killed, as well, in a fierce attack.

The Persians brought together their ships, and the water was an obstacle that prevented the Muslims from getting hold of their enemies. But for the water, the Muslims would have defeated the Persians entirely and none of them would have fled except those stripped of all their possessions and even their clothes. Thirty thousand Persians were killed in this battle, not counting those who were drowned in the sea.

Khalid ibn Al-Walid stayed in the city of Madhar and distributed the spoils, which were the soldiers' garments and weapons, to those who had gained them. He also captured the families of the soldiers and those who supported them. He made a treaty with the peasants and other compliant people for them to pay *jizyah*, for he had previously asked them to do so and they had agreed. Thus, they became under an oath and enjoyed the possession of their lands. Among the

captives was Habib Abul Hassan Al- Basri, who was a Christian.

The Day of Waljah

When the bad tidings reached King Ardashair and he knew about what had beset Qarin ibn Qurbans and the people of Madhar, he sent Andarzighar followed by Bahmin Jazwih in an army, ordering him to meet the former leader in the city of Waljah. The general Andarzighar had already mobilized armies from Hirah and Kuskar from the Arabs and chiefs. They camped beside the army of Bahmin Jazwih. When Andarzighar saw that the two armies were on the alert, he was satisfied and decided to march towards Khalid ibn Al-Walid.

Khalid was on a river, but when he heard about the mobilization of Andarzighar he ordered his army to leave. He ordered Suwaid ibn Muqrin to stay behind and to be in charge of Al-Hafir.

Khalid "Abu Suliman" went to those who were to be left at the lower Tigris River and warned them to be fully cautious and never to be over confident. Afterwards, he proceeded with his army towards Waljah to confront the Persian army.

When the armies clashed, they fought more fiercely than in the previous encounter till they thought that they could no longer persevere. Khalid set an ambush on two sides. Heading the first was Basr ibn Abi Raham and the second was under Sa`id ibn Murrah Al-`Ajli. The ambush attacked from two sides, resulting in the defeat of the Persians, who were taken by surprise and fled. Khalid attacked them from the front and the ambush from behind. Subsequently, Andarzighar died of dehydration on his way.

Khalid ibn Al-Walid did not kill the peasants. He captured the children of the soldiers and those who had supported them in the fight. He called them to agree on *jizyah* and to settle a treaty of

safety, and they submitted. Khalid, as well, fought in single combat on the day of Waljah with a Persian warrior who was as powerful as a thousand men. Khalid killed him, then leaned on him.

The Incident at Alis

On the day of Wajlah, Khalid ibn Al-Walid killed many Christians of the tribe of Bakr ibn Wa'il for assisting the Persians. Many of their people were furious. They wrote to the Persians, who replied to them agreeing to meet in Alis, which was on the Euphrates River. `Abdul Aswad Al-`Ajli was their leader.

King Ardashair wrote to Bahmin Jazwih, who was in Qisiyana, ordering him to march with his army to Alis, where many Persians and Christian Arabs were gathering. Bahmin went to Jaban and commanded him, "Stop yourself and your soldiers from fighting the Arabs till I reach

you, unless they attack first." Thus, Jaban headed for Alis.

Bahmin Jazwih headed towards King Ardashair to seek his advice and instructions. However, on finding that he was ill, he joined Jaban till they reached Alis. He arrived there in the month of Safar and joined `Abdul Aswad and the Christian Arabs of the tribes of Banu `Ajil, Timal Lat, Khabi`a and the native Arabs of Hirah.

Jabir ibn Jubair was a Christian, so he went with `Abdul Aswad. When Khalid knew of their muster, he was ready to face them, but he was unaware of how close Jaban was to him. All he was keen on was to fight those of the local Arabs and Christian Arabs who had assembled to attack him.

Khalid reached Alis. When the armies of Jaban saw him, they said, "Shall we overtake them and show them that we're not afraid of them, then fight them later?"

Jaban said, "If they pay no attention to you and treat you as if you are inferior to them, treat them trivially. Yet, I think they'll take you by surprise and take you from your food."

They disobeyed him and laid the tables and put the food and invited each other.

When Khalid reached them, he stopped and unloaded the baggage. He then proceeded to them accompanied by guards to protect his back. He called to the people, "Where is Abjar? Where is `Abdul Aswad? Where is Malik ibn Qais?" They all were silent except Malik ibn Qais, who stepped forward.

Khalid said to him, "O you unworthy creature! What gave you courage to face me among them although you have no loyalty?" Then Khalid struck him with his sword and cut off his head.

He thus prevented the Persians from the food they had not eaten. Jaban shouted at them, "Didn't I tell you? Truly, I've never before feared a general before today!" Then Jaban ordered `Abdul Aswad and Abjar to head the two flanks of the army.

The Persians and Khalid ibn Al-Walid fought fiercely. What gave the Persians the stamina and stubbornness to fight was their waiting for the arrival of Bahmin Jazwih. That is why they fought desperately against the Muslims, waiting for their destiny.

Khalid prayed, "O Allah, I swear by Your name that if You help us to get hold of them, I won't ever leave one of them alive so long as we can, till I make their blood flow like a river."

Allah fulfilled his prayer exactly as he wished. Khalid's crier shouted, "The captives! The captives! Don't kill except those who refuse." The Muslim cavalry captured the Persians. Khalid

charged some men to kill them in the river, and they spent a day and a night executing their orders. They pursued them for another day till they were done with the two rivers around all sides of Alis and had killed them all.

The river of blood

Al-Qa`qa`` ibn `Amr and some other men said, "Khalid, if you kill all the people on earth, their blood will not flow, for blood dries quickly. If you want their blood to flow to fulfill your oath, you have to throw water over the blood so the blood flows." Thus he did and thus it was called the river of blood.

Khalid and the River of Hirah

Khalid, known as the Sword of Allah, progressed with his army to Hirah. On his way, he stopped between Al-Khamaq and Al-Najaf. He directed himself towards Al-Khurnaq. However, the Persian general Azadhibah crossed the

Euphrates River fleeing without a fight. He was forced to do so because he had heard of the death of King Ardashair, and his army was camping between Al-Gharbiyin and the White Palace.

Khalid's armies reached Al-Khurnaq gradually while Khalid himself left to camp near the Persians between Al-Gharbiyin and the White Palace. The people of Hirah were fortified. Khalid, "the Unsheathed Sword of Allah", ordered his armies to besiege the people of Hirah, each in its place, to attack them later. Dirar ibn Al-Azwar besieged the White Palace in which Iyas ibn Qubaissah Al-Ta'i was seeking refuge, while Dirar ibn Al-Khattab was in charge of the Palace of `Adsiyin, in which was `Adi, the son of the slain `Adi. The Palace of Banu Mazin, in which Akal was hiding, was besieged by Dirar ibn Muqrin Al-Mazni. Al- Muthanna ibn Harithah Al-Shaibani besieged the palace of Ibn Baqilah. His name was `Amr `Abdul Masih, but he was called Ibn Baqilah, which means legume man, because

he went to his people dressed in two green garments. On seeing him they said, "You are no more than green legumes."

The Muslims asked the people of Hirah to Islam but they refused.

The first to attack was Dirar ibn Al-Azwar at the White Palace. When the morning came, he was about to take hold of it, so he asked its people to choose one of the three alternatives: Islam, *jizyah* or fighting. The Persians chose the third alternative. They called to each other, "Throw the pottery at them!" Dirar ibn Al-Azwar told his men, "Step aside so you don't get struck till we know what they called to each other." After a while, the top of the palace was full of people throwing heavy pots at the Muslims.

Dirar shouted, "Shoot them!"

The Muslims approached the White Palace and shot them with arrows till the roof was empty

of any person. After that, they attacked everyone in their way.

Every Muslim general did the same as Dirar did to the people of the White Palace. The Muslims burst into the houses and the monasteries and killed many people. The priests and monks cried, "O you people of the palaces! No one will kill us except you." The people of the palaces said, "O you Arabs! We have accepted one of three alternatives. Fight with us and guard us till you take us to Khalid."

Iyas ibn Qubaissah and his brother went to Dirar ibn Al-Azwar while `Adi ibn `Adi went to Dirar ibn Al-Khattab. `Amr ibn `Abdul Masih and Ibn Akal sought out Dirar ibn Muqrin and Muthanna ibn Harithah Al-Shaibani. The Muslim leaders sent them to Khalid ibn Al-Walid while they remained at their positions.

The first to call for reconciliation was `Amr ibn `Abdul Masih ibn Qais ibn Haiyan ibn Harith.

When the chief Persians reached Khalid, he met them separately. He started with the men of `Adi ibn `Adi and said to them, "Woe to you! Who are you? Are you Arabs or Persians? If you're Arab, why do you bear a grudge against the Arabs? And if you're Persians, why are you indignant to justice and fairness?"

`Adi ibn `Adi replied, "We are Arabs of deep roots and others of no Arab roots."

"If so, why do you defy us and hate us?"

"The proof to what we say is that our only language is Arabic."

Khalid said, "This is right." Then he added, "Choose one of three alternatives: join our religion so you will enjoy the rights we have and undergo what we undergo if you emigrate from this place. If you stay here, you will have to pay *jizyah*, or else there will be the third choice to

fight. For, by Allah, I came with people who are more keen to die than you are keen to live."

"We choose to pay *jizyah.*"

Khalid, the "Sword of Allah". said, "Woe to you! Disbelief is a deceiving desert. The fool of all fools is the one who goes into it and meets two leaders, an Arabic one whom he neglects and another Persian whom he seeks for a guide and treads on his way." They agreed with Khalid to pay one hundred thousand ninety.

The other people sought the same reconciliation as `Adi ibn `Adi and brought many precious gifts to Khalid. `Amr ibn `Abdul Masih had a small bag with him. Khalid took the bag and emptied its contents into the palm of his hand, asking, "What is this, `Amr?"

"Truthfully, it's poison."

"Why did you bring it with you?"

"I feared you would be the opposite to what I have found, and I came to you fearless, for death is preferable to me than any harm that I could bring to my people and my fellow men in my village."

"No soul shall die unless its time has come to an end. In the name of Allah, the best of all names, the Lord of the heavens and earth, no illness shall harm as long as His name is mentioned, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful." Khalid then put the poison in his mouth and swallowed it.

At this sight `Amr said, "Truly, you Arabs will get what you aim for." He said to the people of Hirah, "I've never seen such a promising issue as I saw today."

Afterwards, Khalid prayed the prayer of conquest, which was eight consecutive *rakahs*.

The Battle of Anbar or the Eyes

Khalid proceeded accompanied by Al-Aqra` ibn Habis Al-Tamimi till they reached the city of Anbar. They found that its people were fortified under the leadership of Shirzad, the ruler of Sabat.

The people cried, "This is an evil morning for Anbar!"

Khalid arrived at Anbar and went around the trenches. Fighting broke out and he said to his archers, "I see people who have no experience in there, so shoot at their eyes, and nothing but their eyes."

The Muslims shot arrows all together, and consequently the people of Anbar had a thousand gouged eyes on that day. That is why it was called the Battle of the Eyes.

On seeing this, Shirzad sent to Khalid, calling for a pact that did not satisfy him. So, Khalid sent Shirzad's messengers back, and at the

narrowest place in the trench he slaughtered the army's horses and threw the carcasses into the trench, crossed and struck. The two armies clashed and the victory went to the Muslims.

Shirzad sent to Khalid, agreeing to his terms on the condition that he allow Shirzad to betake himself to a safe place along with some cavalry without any luggage or money. Khalid accepted and Shirzad left. Khalid concluded a treaty of safety and conciliation with the people of Anbar.

Khalid then resumed his march in the lands of Iraq till he reached Al-Farad, which lies on the borders of Al-Sham, Iraq and the Arab Peninsula. On his way he passed by many cities and villages. In each he had more success than the previous one. Some of the cities agreed on *jizyah,* while others fought desperately till Allah's wrath afflicted them with a defeat at the hands of the Muslims. No one survived death except those who were quickly defeated like a stroke of lightning.

The Battle of Qadisiyah

`Umar sent Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas to Iraq accompanied by Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin. No sooner had Sa`d reached Qadisiyah than he learned that Yazdigird, the Persian emperor, had mobilized a massive army under the leadership of Rustom. Sa`d wrote to `Umar, who replied, "Don't be upset by what afflicts you. Seek Allah's aid and depend on Him. Send wise negotiators to call the Persian emperor to Allah. May Allah make their call a means to weaken the Persians."

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas sent a delegation of the wisest men including Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin, Bisr ibn Abi Rahm, Hamlah ibn Huwaiyah, Hanzhalah ibn Al-Rab`i, Furat ibn Haiyan, `Adi ibn Suhail, `Utarid ibn Hajib, Al-Ash`ath ibn Qais, Al-Mughirah ibn Zararah ibn Al-Nabbash Al- Asadi, `Amr ibn Ma`di Karib and others.

They left the Muslim camp and headed towards Yazdigird. People gathered looking at

them on their horses. Yazdigird brought an interpreter and said to him, "Ask them: Why did you come? What makes you invade us and be enchanted by our land? Is it because we were busy and paid no heed to you that you dare to defy us?"

Al-Nu`man ibn `Amr ibn Muqrin said to his companions, "If you wish, I can speak on your behalf, or if someone likes to speak I will give him the priority."

They said, "Speak on our behalf."

Al-Nu`man proceeded. "Allah was merciful to us, so He sent us a Messenger to guide us to the right and forbid us from evil. In return, Allah promised us the goodness of this life and the Hereafter. Our Messenger asked every tribe and they divided into two parties, one that tried to be closer to him and obey him and one that rejected him. Then, he was ordered to start with those Arab tribes that had rejected him. So he started with them and they agreed either willingly or

unwillingly. Those who agreed unwillingly benefited, and those who agreed willingly had additional benefits. Thus, we all realized the goodness of his message compared to the hostility and aversion that we had been suffering. Then, he ordered us to start with the neighboring nations to call them to justice. We, therefore, call you to our religion, for it is a religion that deems good things as good and censures all sorts of evil. If you refuse, one bad thing - which is *jizyah* - will be better than another that is worse. If you embrace our religion, we will leave Allah's Book with you and make sure that you judge by its laws, and we will go back and leave you, your affairs and your land. If you pay *jizyah*, we will accept it and be your guardians, or else we will have to fight you."

Yazdigird said, "I have never known a nation that was more miserable, fewer in number or more hostile to each other than you. We used to ask the villages of the outlying districts to attack you and they were successful in saving us our sweat, for

you did not dare to approach Persia. If some kind of arrogance has touched you, do not be deceived and forget who we are. However, if it is poverty and need of money that motivate you, we will allocate some sustenance to be added to your harvest, be generous to you, grant you clothing and assign a king to rule you kindly."

When the Muslim delegation finished talking, Yazdigird concluded, "Go back to your general and tell him that I will send him Rustom to bury him with you in the dust in the trench of Qadisiyah."

The advance of Rustom's army

After this event, Rustom could wait no more, so he mustered an army of a hundred twenty thousand warriors preceded by elephants. Advancing slowly but steadily, he crossed the Euphrates River near the city of Babylon, then proceeded towards Hirah till he was visible to the Muslim army. He camped on the opposite bank of

the river. He called to the people of Hirah saying, "O you enemies of Allah! You were jubilant when the Arabs invaded our lands and were their spies on us and supplied them with money."

The people of Hirah averted his evil by assigning `Amr ibn `Abdul Masih to be their spokesman. He replied to Rustom, "As for your claim that we were jubilant at their coming, what did they do? What did they do to make us happy? They claim that we are their slaves. They do not believe in our religion and they assure us that we will be doomed to hell. As for your claim that we were their spies on you, what forces them to take us as spies? For your people fled from them and left their villages, thus nothing stopped them from anything they wanted to do and if they liked, they would have taken hold of everything everywhere. And as for your accusation that we assisted them with money, we conciliated with them by this money to save our souls when you did not protect

us from being taken as captives or fighting and being killed."

Rustom said, "Right you are."

Rustom assigned Al-Hurmuzan over the right flank of the army, Mahran ibn Bihram Al-Razi over its left flank, and Al-Bairazan over the rear.

Rustom tries to avoid fighting

Rustom was a courageous and dauntless warrior, yet he was an astrologer. He saw that the Persian fortune was ill-starred and that their welfare would be misery. Thus, he wrote to his brother telling him about what he saw: "I foresaw the secrets of the planets and gathered the hidden consequences and saw the palace of the Sassanid sovereign empty and the seal of their dominion passing and inclined to obliteration. On the other hand, the sun, moon and Venus were ascendant to the Arabs, for their fortune will be goodness and superiority.... When you receive this letter of

mine, collect your money, fortunes, and cavalry and go to Azerbaijan and seek refuge there.... You have to protect the king, for he is the only survivor of his ancestors."

Rustom camped on the Atiq River and observed the Muslims. Then he sent to one of their generals saying, "You are our neighbors and once a group of you was under our sovereignty and we treated them well and granted them protection and gave them many privileges." He intended conciliation by reminding the Arabs of the Persians' good deeds towards the Arabs who bordered on them. His efforts at reconciliation failed.

The Muslim general replied, "What you mentioned is right, yet our condition is not like that of our fellows. We did not come to you seeking earthly grace. On the contrary, all that we seek and care about is the Hereafter." Rustom assembled the Persian men and mentioned this to them, so they were kindled by rage and arrogance.

The negotiations of Rustom and the Muslims

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas sent Rab`i ibn `Amir to Rustom. The Persians prepared to meet the messenger by laying down carpets and placing a golden couch with cushions made of golden cloth for Rustom, who was dressed in his best attire of colored woolen garments. Rab`i ibn `Amir arrived on his horse holding his sword and spear, with his hair in four plaits, and wearing shabby clothes.

They said to him, "Drop your sword!"

He replied, "I did not come to you to drop my sword at your command! You are the ones who asked me to come."

They told Rustom what he said, and he said, "Let him in."

Rab`i ibn `Amir proceeded leaning on his spear and walking steadily, leaving no carpet or

cushion unspoiled or untorn. On reaching Rustom, he sat on the ground and fixed his spear.

He was asked, "Why do you do this?"

Rab`i replied, "We do not like to sit on your ornaments."

`Abud, Rustom's translator and one of the people of Hirah, said to him, "Why did you come to us?"

Rab`i replied, "Allah sent us. He ordered us to turn those whom He wants from worshiping creatures to worshiping the Creator of the creatures and from the narrowness of life to its vastness and from the injustice of religions to the fairness of Islam. Allah sent us with His religion to His creatures so that we would call them to Him. If any accept this from us, we will accept it from them, go back and leave them and their lands. Whereas, if any refuse, we will fight till we meet Allah's promise."

Rustom asked, "What is Allah's promise?"

"Paradise for those who die fighting the rebellious and triumph for those who survive."

"Now we have heard your talk, give us a respite so that we can think it over, and you do as well."

"Agreed. How many days would you like, one or two?"

"Enough time to write to our counselors and chiefs," Rustom answered. He wanted to delay.

Rab`i said, "The practice of our Prophet ﷺ and the attitude of our generals is that we do not let our enemies take hold of us and that we give them no more than three days of respite on the encounter. We will, thus, give you three days respite, so consider your condition and choose one of three choices after the respite is over. Either Islam, and in return we will leave you and your land; or *jizyah,* so we will accept and grant you

safety and if you are in need of us, we will assist you; or fight on the fourth day if you do not attack earlier. I guarantee this on behalf of my companions and on behalf of all whom you see."

Rustom asked, "Are you their master?"

"No, but the Muslims are like one whole body, they are parts of each other, they support each other, (like the organs of one body)."

The Persians cross the Euphrates

The three days passed and the respite came to an end, so Rustom asked the Muslims, "Will you cross to us or we to you?"

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas replied, "You cross to us."

At night, Sa`d sent messengers to the Muslims to be on the alert in their positions. Rustom's army spent the night filling in the river opposite to Qadis by throwing in wood, mud and

so forth till they had built a bridge, which they crossed with their loads and reached the bank of the Euphrates, where they camped.

Rustom put on two shields and his armor and took his weapons. He ordered his horse to be brought to him, mounted it and said, "Tomorrow, we will crush them mercilessly."

A man said, "If Allah wills."

Rustom said, "Even if He doesn't will."

Measures to start the battle

The Persians started to arrange their lines. Rustom sat on his throne in the center surrounded by eighteen horses loaded with boxes and men and seven or eight elephants loaded as well.

Jalinus was between Rustom and the right flank, while Al-Bairazan was between him and the left flank.

Yazdigird assigned men on the way between him and the Euphrates whose duty was to tell him the tidings of the battle.

The Muslims took their positions. Zahwah ibn `Abdullah, `Assim ibn `Amr Al-Tamimi and Shurahbil ibn Al-Samit were in charge, with all the Muslims mixed in the center and both flanks. A voice cried out to the Muslims, "Envy is only in jihad to raise Allah's word. O people! Envy each other and compete in jihad!"

Sa`d Ibn Abi Waqqas Falls Ill

Sa`d ibn Abi waqqas was afflicted with furuncles and sciatica, which prevented him from mounting a horse or camel, or even sitting. Therefore, he watched the people from his palace and at his chest was a cushion on which he leaned. He threw down pieces of leather on which were written his orders to Khalid ibn `Arfatah, who stood below.

Sa`d wrote to the people, "I assign Khalid ibn `Arfatah to be my lieutenant, though nothing prevents me from being in his place except my pains. Thus, obey him, for he orders you according to my word and follows my decisions."

When they heard this, they were relieved and accepted his words and agreed to his decisions. They urged each other to obey and accepted his excuse.

Sa`d said, "O people, keep your positions till you pray Zhuhr. After you have finished your prayers, I will say 'Allahu Akbar,' so repeat after me and be ready. On hearing the second cry of 'Allahu Akbar,' put on your shields. At my third cry, repeat 'Allahu Akbar,' and may your cavalrymen motivate the others. When I cry 'Allahu Akbar' for the fourth time, advance all till you mingle with your enemies and say, 'There is no power nor might except with Allah.'"

The first day: the Day of Armat

When Sa`d cried 'Allah Akbar' the third time, the group of intrepid ones started the attack and was met by their Persian counterparts, with striking and stabbing between them.

Ghalib ibn `Abdullah Al-Asadi advanced and was faced by Hurmuz, who was one of the kings of Persia and was crowned. Ghalib took him prisoner and brought him to Sa`d, then went back to resume the battle against the Persians. `Amr ibn Ma`di Karib encountered a Persian who defied him. `Amr broke his neck, put his sword on his throat and cut down, then threw him down.

The elephants vex the Muslims

The elephants had twenty men on each of them. Thus they were movable fortresses. These elephants attacked the Muslim army and disordered the ranks, then aimed at Banu Bajilah

and frightened their horses, thus jeopardizing the whole tribe, which was near destruction.

Sa`d sent to Banu Asad saying, "Protect Banu Bajilah and the people with them." Tulaihah ibn Khuwailid Al-Asadi rushed with some of his men and said, "You were called after the lion [*asad*] to be as fierce as it is. Be tough and do not weaken; attack and do not retreat or flee."

He was urging them to fight and be calm. They stabbed the elephants and hit those on their backs till they hindered them from progressing further. A high-ranking Persian faced Tulaihah ibn Khuwailid Al-Asadi and they fought until Tulaihah killed him. Al-Ash`ath ibn Qais urged the tribe of Kindah to fight and struggle, so they attacked the Persians that were in their way and forced them out of their positions.

The Persians gather against Banu Asad

The whole Persian party, including Dhul Hajib and Al-Jalinus gathered against Banu Asad. The battle turned against Banu Asad. The elephants attacked the right and left flanks of the Muslim army and charged against the cavalry as well.

Sa`d cried 'Allahu Akbar' for the fourth time and sent to `Assim ibn `Amr ordering him to trick the elephants so that they could avoid their harm and lessen the threat to those of Banu Asad and others who were combating them.

The Muslim archers shot at the elephants while others cut their tails and the belts and ropes that held on the boxes. The elephants yelled in pain and all of them lost their loads, and no man remained on their backs. Both armies clashed and Banu Asad were somewhat relieved. The Persians were forced back to their former positions.

The second day: The Day of Aghwath

On the morning of the second day, the Muslims carried their martyrs to `Udhaib for burial. They also carried the injured ones and left them under the care of the women to nurse them.

The happy news of the opening of Damascus arrived, for it had been opened a month before Qadisiyah. Extra cavalry joined them from Ash-Sham, for Caliph `Umar sent to `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah asking him to order the people of Iraq to join the battle. Thus, he mobilized them and they were six thousand men under Hashim ibn `Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas. In the van was Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr Al-Tamimi.

Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr encouraged the Muslims to fight saying, "Do as I do." He then advanced towards the Persians and said, "Is there anyone who wants to fight a duel?" Dhul Hajib Bahman Jadhweh accepted the challenge and Al-Qa`qa` succeeded in killing him. The Muslims were

jubilant at the death of Dhul Hajib. Al-Qa`qa` called to Al-Bairazan, "Is there anyone who wants to fight a duel?"

Two men came to him, Al-Bairazan and Al-Bandawan. Al-Qa`qa` clashed swords with Al-Bairazan, killing him, while Al-Harith ibn Zhibyan fought with Al-Bandawan, putting his life to an end. Al-Qa`qa` cried to the Muslims, "O you assembled Muslims! Encounter them with your swords, for people harvest by them!" The Muslims killed many Persians.

One Persian came forward and asked to fight a duel. Al-A`raf ibn Al-A`lam fought and killed him. Another man came and was also killed, then Al-A`raf was surrounded by the Persian cavalry, who defeated him and took his weapons. However, he threw the dust into their faces till he returned safely back to the Muslims. The two armies continued the struggle till midnight. The night of Armath was called the Night of Calm,

while the night of Aghwath was called the Night of Darkness.

Abu Mahjan Al-Thaqafi leaves his prison to fight

Abu Mahjan Al-Thaqafi had been imprisoned and chained in the palace. However, he begged Salma, the wife of Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, to free him so that he could take part in the battle against the Persians, promising that he would return to his jail and chains at night. He kept on begging and pleading with her till she was forced by his insistence to accept. Salma set him free. Abu Mahjan took Sa`d's horse Al-Balqa' and rode out of the back door of the palace. When he was near the Persian right flank, he cried, "Allahu Akbar," then attacked the left flank, flashing his spear while the people were astonished at him, unaware of his identity.

On top of his palace, Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas saw the man and said, "If Abu Mahjan weren't in

prison, I'd have said that's him and that's Al-Balqa'." Some Muslims said, "This must be Khidr [the servant of Allah who was mentioned in Surat Al-Kahf]."

When it was midnight and the Muslims and Persians ceased fighting, Abu Mahjan returned to the palace and put the chains round his leg as he had promised. Salma talked to her husband Sa`d and told him about Mahjan and his devotion. Sa`d called for him and set him free and did not blame his wife for what she had done. Two thousand Muslims were killed and injured, while there were ten thousand Persian casualties on the day of Aghwath.

The third day: the Day of `Amas

On this day, the Muslims carried their deceased to the graves for burial, and the injured were left in the care of the women to nurse and aid them. Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr spent the night talking to his fellows and said, "When the sun rises,

attack a hundred by a hundred. If Hashim ibn `Utbah arrives with the reinforcements, things will be better. Otherwise, renew the enthusiasm of the people and remind them of their aims."

When the sun rose, the companions of Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr advanced as he had planned with them. On seeing them, he cried "Allahu Akbar!" and the Muslims repeated it and cried, "The reinforcements have arrived!"

The two armies fought. By the time Al-Qa`qa`'s last group attacked, Hashim ibn `Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas had arrived with seven hundred men. The Muslims told him about Al-Qa`qa`'s plan and what they had done in the previous two days.

Hashim ibn `Utbah arrayed his men seventy by seventy, including Qais ibn Hubairah ibn `Abd Yaghuth, who was well known as Qais ibn Al-Makshuh Al-Muradi. He organized the ranks till he mingled with the army and reached its center.

He shouted together with the Muslims, "Allahu Akbar!" and added, "Start the attack by chasing then shooting." He rushed upon the disbelievers, assaulting them till he broke through their lines and reached the riverbank. Then he returned to his former position.

The Persians' elephants attacked, guarded by infantrymen at their rear to prevent the Muslims from cutting their tails or bands. They fought till midday, and the battle was severe for both the Muslims and the Persians. Yazdigird sent more reinforcements from the armies that remained with him to strengthen the Persian army. If not for the plan of Al- Qa`qa` on the first two days till the arrival of the aid of Hashim ibn `Utbah and his companions, the Muslims would have been defeated and ruined.

The Persian elepants flee

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas overlooked and managed the battle from the top of his palace.

When he observed the elephants torturing the Muslims and attacking fiercely like the day of Armath, he consulted with some Persians who had declared their Islam. They suggested attacking the elephants' eyes and trunks. Sa`d thus sent to Al-Qa`qa` and `Assim ibn `Amr Al-Tamimi telling them to focus on the white elephant. He sent to Al-Hammal and Al-Ribbiyil to attack the scabby elephant. These two were the biggest and the leaders of the other animals.

Al-Qa`qa` and `Assim attacked the white elephant fiercely, throwing their spears at its eyes. The animal bellowed, shook its head and fell to the ground, causing all the men who were on its back to fall down as well. Then it lowered its trunk, and Al-Qa`qa` struck it so that it fell on its side and crushed all those who were on its back.

As for Al-Hammal, he asked Al-Ribbiyil, "Choose whether to strike the trunk of the scabby elephant while I stab its eyes or the other way round, you hit its eyes and I strike its trunk."

Al-Ribbiyil chose to strike the trunk, so Al-Hammal attacked the scabby elephant and stabbed its eyes. The elephant knelt down and Al- Ribbiyil struck and cut its trunk so that the elephant ran away terrified till it jumped into the river. The other elephants followed their leader, broke through the lines of the Persians, crossed the river after it and reached Al- Mada'in with their boxes on them, killing all those who were on their backs.

The night of Qadisiyah

It was also called the Night of Growling. It was called so because the Muslims abstained from talking and only uttered growls.

After the elephants had fled, the Muslims were face to face with the Persians. The Muslims advanced towards the Persians having their backs guarded by their cavalry. They fought fiercely from the beginning of the day till the night. Both armies persevered and both came out on an equal footing save for the sounds of the heroes fighting.

Due to these sounds it was called the Night of Growling.

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas sent to Tulaihah ibn Khuwailid and `Amr ibn Ma`di Karib and said to them, "Go to Makhda - a ford in the river - below the soldiers and guard it lest the enemy should cross through it and surprise us." Tulaihah and `Amr headed out to execute the order. However, Tulaihah said to `Amr, "What about crossing the river and surprising the Persians from behind?" `Amr said, "No, we would be better to cross from below."

They went apart, and Tulaihah charged upon the armies from behind the river while `Amr descended upon them and they both attacked their enemies.

Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr marched towards the Persians without taking the permission of Sa`d, who prayed, "Allah, forgive him and grant him

victory, for I permit him though he did not ask for my permission."

Then Sa`d said, "When I say 'Allahu Akbar' three times, attack and say 'Allah Akbar' as well."

However, they did not wait and Banu Asad attacked, followed by Najiliyah, then the tribe of Kindah. Then the chiefs advanced, for because of the Arab's boldness, they could not hinder them in the battlefield, but they rushed forward determinedly.

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas waited quite a long period between each cry in order to give them enough time to prepare themselves and to be ready, yet they could not wait. When he cried, "Allahu Akbar" for the third time, they advanced together, mingled with the Persians and faced the night after `Isha' Prayer.

The Arabs and the Persians fought a battle such as they had not experienced before and the

news of the battle was cut from both Sa`d and Rustom. Sa`d kept on praying Allah to grant victory to the Muslims.

By the first rays of the sun in the morning, the victory of the Muslims was proved by the voice of Al-Qa`qa` chanting:

We have killed a lot of people

Nearly four hundred fifty-one

We fought desperately and after

They were killed, I prayed to Allah

And stayed cautious and alert.

The Muslims did not sleep at all that night.

In the morning, Al-Qa`qa` walked among the people saying, "Defeat is after an hour for those who attack them now. Thus, wait for an hour, then

attack, for victory comes with patience, so prefer patience to fear."

Some of the leaders gathered to him, then they proceeded straightaway to Rustom till they mingled with his guards by the morning. At midday, a windstorm blew and took away Rustom's tent and throne and threw them into the river. Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr and his group reached the throne, and when the fierce wind blew away the tent, Rustom ran away and hid behind a loaded pack mule. Al-Qa`qa` saw Rustom, and so did Hilal ibn `Ullafah, who struck and cut the ties of the baggage on the mule. The load fell onto Rustom, who ran away towards the river and threw himself in. Hilal ibn `Ullafah saw and pursued him, dragged him out of the river by his leg, then struck his forehead with his sword till he killed him. Afterwards, he carried him and threw him under the feet of the mules. Hilal then mounted on Rustom's throne and yelled, "By the

name of the Lord of the Ka`bah, I have killed Rustom."

Consequently, the center of the Persian army became disrupted, and this led to their defeat. Al-Jalinus mounted a hill and cried to the Persians, "Cross the river!" However, the Muslims pierced them with spears.

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas sent to Hilal ibn `Ullafah asking him, "Where is your 'fellow'?"

Hilal replied, "I threw him down at the feet of the mules."

"Go get him!" Sa`d said.

Hilal went and brought the body of Rustom. Sa`d said, "Strip him as much as you like." Hilal took his spoils, which were the shields and armor, and did not leave anything on him.

Dirar ibn Al-Khattab took the Persian standard, but he was given thirty thousand

dirhams in exchange for it. Some Muslim cavalrymen pursued the Persian soldiers, and Zahrah ibn `Abdullah chased Al-Jalinus, who lagged behind to protect their backs. They fought and Zahrah succeeded in killing him and taking his possessions. The Muslim army clashed with the Persians between Al-Khararah and Al-Sielhain to Najat till the night. Afterwards, they retreated and the Muslims stayed in Qadissiyah. There, the Persians were afflicted with a grave defeat that eliminated the Persian glory and abolished the existence and features of one of the greatest nations of that time.

THE OPENING
OF AL-MADA'IN

THE OPENING OF AL-MADA'IN

After Allah the Most Powerful had granted victory to the Muslims in Qadisiyah and afflicted the Persians with the most ugly defeat they had ever known in history, many events followed. The most important and well-known was the opening of Mada'in.

The Day of Pers

The fighting between the Muslims and the Persians ceased for two months so that the Muslims could have some rest after the Battle of Qadisiyah and prepare themselves properly to resume the fight. During this period of time, Allah the Almighty cured Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas of the furuncles and sciatica that had afflicted him before the Battle of Qadisiyah.

Sa`d led the Muslim army till it reached Pers, a place in Babylon, where there were relics of King Bukhtanassir and also a high hill called the castle of Pers.

Sa`d assigned `Abdullah ibn Al-Mu`tim to head the army together with Zahrah ibn Huwaiyatah and Shurahbil ibn Al-Samit. They encountered and fought with a group of Persians, who fled to Babylon. The Persian general Bu`bahri was struck by Zahrah's sword so he threw himself into the river and died of his wounds. Bistam, the chief of Pers, came and reconciled with Zahrah, made pontoon bridges for him and told him that the Persians were gathered in Babylon.

The Day of Babylon

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas resumed his march with his army till they arrived at Kufa, the famous city in the land of Babylon in Iraq. He was accompanied by Hashim ibn `Utbah. He had

information that the Persians had gathered and assembled their army under the leadership of Al-Fairuzan to face Zahrah ibn Huwaiyah. Sa`d proceeded with his generals towards Babylon.

The two parties clashed. After a short round of engagement in the battle, Allah the Almighty afflicted the Persians with defeat. Al-Hurmuzan fled to Ahwas, which he took possession of, then he proceeded to Nahawand, where were the treasures of Khusraw, which he also plundered.

Sa`d stayed in Babylon for some days, then went to Kutha, a town in Iraq in the land of Babylon that was the birthplace of Prophet Ibrahim and where he was thrown into the fire. He visited the house where Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had been imprisoned. He looked in wonder and astonishment, and prayed for the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ and for Ibrahim and all the prophets (peace be upon them all). He then recited the words of the Qur'an that mean ❮… such are the days that We alternated among the people… ❯

(Al Imran 3: 140)

Mada'in, which means "cities", was so called by the Arab's because it consisted of seven cities, some of which were on the western side of the Tigris River and some on the eastern side. It was twenty-five miles from Baghdad. It was the Persian capital city and the residence of the emperors, who called it Aktisighun.

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas ordered Zahrah ibn Huwaiyah to precede him to Bahrasir. When Zahrah arrived there, he was met by Shirzad, the ruler of Sabat, who agreed to pay *jizyah*.

Zahrah resumed his advance till he was met by a Persian brigade under the leadership of Buran, Khusraw's daughter. After a fierce struggle, the Persians were defeated. Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas marched towards Bahrasir. When the Muslims saw the great palace of Khusraw, Dirar ibn Al-Khattab exclaimed, "Allahu Akbar! The palace of Khusraw! This is the fulfillment of the promise of Allah and His Messenger!"

When Dirar cried "Allahu Akbar!" the Muslims repeated after him and whenever a brigade of the army arrived, they did the same. Then they entered the city.

In the month of Safar, the Muslims entered Bahrasir. Beforehand, Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas had besieged the city for some days. Then he sent the cavalrymen to raid on all those who had no pact with the Muslims. They captured a large number of peasants, so Sa`d sent to Caliph `Umar asking him what to do with them. The Commander of the Faithful `Umar replied, "Those peasants who came to you through those who had a treaty with you are captives. But as for those who fled but you succeeded in capturing, you are free to do what you like with them." So Sa`d freed them all.

The siege of western Mada'in

The siege was so hard day after day on the people of western Mada'in that they had nothing to eat except cats and dogs. However, they were

bold and withstood the hardship of the siege. Afterwards, they crossed the Tigris to eastern Mada'in.

Sa`d let the people have suitable residences and stayed in Bahrasir for some days in the month of Safar, 16 A.H., with the aim of crossing the river. Yet he was cautious. One of the disbelievers came to him and told him about a ford in the river that led to the heart of the valley, but Sa`d hesitated and refused.

Unexpectedly, there was a flood in the Tigris River, and Sa`d had a vision that the Muslims' horses were easily and safely crossing. He thus made his decision to cross. Another Persian came to him saying, "What hinders you? If three days pass, Yazdigird will take everything in Mada'in."

So Sa`d renewed his decision to cross the river. He gathered the people and spoke to them, encouraging them to cross saying, "Who will start and guard the ford for us so that when other

people attack they will not be stopped by the Persians?"

`Assim ibn `Amr, the intrepid, went to execute the mission with six hundred brave men whom Sa`d put under his leadership. `Assim led them till he stood on the bank of the Tigris and said, "Who will come with me to protect the ford, Al-Farad, from your enemy and to guard you till you cross?" Sixty men were chosen, including `Assim ibn Wallad and Shurahbil and other strong and courageous ones. `Assim ibn `Amr divided them into two groups: one group riding mares and the other riding stallions.

They plunged into the Tigris to cross it, followed by the rest of the six hundred men. The first to arrive at the other side of the river were `Assim Al-Taim, Al-Kalaj, Abu Mafzar, Shurahbil, Hajjal Al-`Ajli, Malik ibn Ka`b Al-Hamadani, and a youth from the tribe of Banu Al-Harith ibn Ka`b.

When the Persians saw what they were doing, they prepared many horses to face those preceding Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas and then they rushed into the Tigris. The horses were forced back and were checked by `Assim ibn `Amr in Al-Sur`an near Al-Farad who said, "The spears! The spears! Throw them and focus on the eyes."

The two parties confronted each other and fought. The Muslims targeted the eyes and killed the majority, and the surviving Persians were one-eyed. The Muslims rushed one after the other into the Tigris.

The Muslims then took the Persians by surprise, breaking their plans and preventing them from their treasures. They entered Al-Mada'in in Safar 16 A.H. and looted what remained in the palaces of Khusraw.

It was said

When Sa`d opened Bahrasir and resided there, the Persians went to Mada'in, where they took ships and brought them together, leaving nothing for Sa`d, who failed to find a ship. The Tigris River overflowed and its water turned black and gushed with foam due to the flood. Sa`d was told that Yazdigird was planning to take the fortunes and goods from Mada'in to Hulwan and that if he did not reach him within three days, any further effort would be of no avail.

Sa`d delivered a speech on the banks of the Tigris. He praised and thanked Allah, then said, " Your enemies sought refuge with this river from you, for you cannot arrive at them by it. Yet, they can assault you if they like by attacking you from their ships, for nothing behind your backs threatens you. I perceive that you had better start to fight against the enemies by your good wills before this life seduces you, for I have decided to cross this water to them."

They all replied, “May Allah determine the good decision for you and us. Do this!”

Hence, Sa`d ordered the people to cross saying, “Who will start protecting the ford of the river for us…” - he meant the opposite bank of the river - “so that people may cross safely?”

`Assim ibn `Amr and about six hundred bold men volunteered and Sa`d made `Assim their leader. As they stood at the edge of the river, `Assim said, “Who will volunteer to cross with me before the others so that we can protect the ford from the other side?” Sixty bold men answered him. The Persians were standing on the other side of the river.

A Muslim advanced while the people were hesitant to cross. He said, “Are you afraid of this trivial thing?” Then he recited the Qur’anic verse meaning ❮And no soul can die except by Allah’s permission. The term is preordained… ❯ (Al

Imran 3: 145) Then he plunged into the river followed by the people.

The sixty were divided into two groups, one on stallions and the other on mares. When the Persians saw the Muslims floating on the water they said, "Madmen! Madmen!" Then they added, "Truly, you are not fighting human beings but demons."

They dispatched some cavalrymen to confront the first group of Muslims to prevent them from getting out of the water. `Assim directed them to focus on the eyes. They stabbed the eyes of the Persians' horses and they ran away, the Persians unable to curb them. `Assim and his men chased them till they forced them out on the other side of the river.

Thereupon, Sa`d waded into the river with the rest of the army when he saw that the other side was safely guarded by the Muslims. Sa`d ordered them to say upon entering the water,

"From Allah we seek aid and on Him we depend. Allah is our Protector and Guardian. There is no might or strength without Allah, the Most Powerful, the Great."

Then he plunged into the river together with the Muslims, and no one lagged behind. They went through the river as if they were walking on solid ground. This was due to the assurance and security they felt and due to their belief in Allah's promise, victory and assistance to Sa`d, the uncle of the Prophet and one of the ten Companions to whom was promised Paradise. The Prophet ﷺ had also prayed for Sa`d saying, "Allah, fulfill his demands and grant him victory."

On this day, Sa`d prayed for safety and victory for his army. The Muslim army, therefore, did not lose anything during the process of crossing except a wooden cup.

Entering Al-Mada'in

When the horses got out of the water, they shook the water off their manes and, neighing, charged after the Persians till they arrived at Al-Mada'in. However, they found it empty of its people and what fortunes, luggage and possessions they could take. Left behind were cattle, clothing, belongings, pots, and precious perfumes and oils. Khusraw's safe had contained three billion dinars. The Persians took what they could and left the rest, which was estimated to be nearly half the amount.

The first brigade to enter Mada'in was the Brigade of Horror followed by the Mute Brigade. When Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas arrived, he called the people of the White Palace for three days, taking the Companion Salman Al-Farisi, who was of Persian origin, to be his spokesman. On the third day, they departed the palace and Sa`d resided in it, taking Khusraw's reception room - *iwan* - as a mosque.

When Sa`d entered the White Palace, he recited Allah's words meaning

> ❮How many were the gardens and the water springs that they left behind. And sown fields and fine dwellings, and pleasant things wherein they took delight! Thus We bequeathed it on another people.❯
>
> (Al-Dukhan 44: 25-28)

Then he advanced to the center of the hall and prayed the Prayer of Opening, which consisted of eight *rak`ahs*. He prayed the Jum`ah Prayer in the palace in Safar 16 A.H. This was the first Jum`ah Prayer in Iraq.

The spoils

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas assigned `Amr ibn Muqrin to be responsible for collecting the spoils and ordered Salman ibn Rabi`ah Al-Bahili to be

responsible for the division and allocation. Everything that was in the palaces, mansions, houses and markets was gathered and registered. He added what the pursuers brought, for at the time of defeat the people of the city plundered the treasures and fled everywhere. Everyone who ran away with something was tracked down by the Muslims and deprived of his load. They also found Turkish domes full of baskets sealed with lead. They thought they were full of food but discovered that there were golden and silver pots. One would wander selling gold and silver similarly. They also found plenty of camphor, which they thought was salt and used it in baking, but they found it bitter tasting.

The pursuers with Zahrah ibn Huwaiyah chased a Persian group to the bridge of Nahrawan. They crowded over it and when a mule fell into the water, they ran down after it. This action caused the Muslims to realize that there was something important on the mule.

The parties struggled until the Muslims took the mule, on which they found Khusraw's trinkets: his clothing and wardrobe, his sash and his shield, which was decorated with jewels and which he used wear on parade.

Al-Kalaj or Al-Kalakh followed two mules led by two Persians, whom he killed. He took the mules to the one registering the spoils and said to him, "Wait till we see what you've got!"

He unloaded the two mules and found Khusraw's crown, which was studded with precious jewels. On the other mule were two baskets containing Khusraw's clothes that he used to wear. They were of silk brocade and gold thread and inlaid with jewels. There were other garments that were not made of silk yet were adorned with jewels, too.

Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr followed another Persian, whom he killed and took two bags from. In one of them, he found five swords. In the other

he found six swords and shields, including Khusraw's shields and armor, the shields of Heraclius; Khaqan, the Turkish king; Daher, the king of India; Bahram Jarbin; and Al-Nu`man.

Al-Qa`qa` brought all these to Sa`d, who gave him the liberty to chose from the swords. He chose the sword of Heraclius and was given the shield of Bahram. The rest was carried back by the Mute Brigade.

`Ismah ibn Khalid Al-Dabbi took two men riding two donkeys to the one responsible for the spoils. On one of them were two baskets. One basket contained a golden horse with a silver saddle and on its mouth and neck were rubies and emeralds inlaid in silver, as well as a bridle. In addition to this was a silver camel with a golden saddle and cushions and a golden rein. All these were inlaid with rubies and on it was a golden statue of a man studded with jewels. Khusraw used to put this work of art on the cylinder of his crown.

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas sent one fifth of the spoils to the Commander of the Faithful `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. When he saw the booty and Khusraw's sword, belt and ornaments, he said, "Those who have brought this to me are truly honest men." `Ali ibn Abi Talib said to him, "You are honest so your people embraced honesty as well."

Opening Tikrit

The Companion Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas sent the armies to Tikrit, which was guarded by a Byzantine army together with the tribes of Iyad, Taghlib, Al-Namr and Al-Shaharijah, which were Christian tribes headed by Al-Antaq. `Umar had written beforehand to Sa`d telling him to send `Abdullah ibn Al-Mu`tim at the head of an army marching to Tikrit. He also ordered that the vanguard be led by Rab`i ibn Al-Afkal and the cavalry by `Arfajah ibn Hurthumah.

`Abdullah ibn Al-Mu`tim advanced to Tikrit and besieged it for forty days. He asked the Arabs that were allied with the tribe of Antaq to assist him. They agreed and did not conceal anything from him.

When the Byzantines realized that the Muslims had the upper hand, they left their leaders and carried their possessions to the ships. The tribes of Taghlib, Iyad, and Al-Namr sent news of this to `Abdullah ibn Al-Mu`tim and asked him to grant them safety, telling him that they were on his side.

`Abdullah sent to them, "If you are truthful, embrace Islam." They acceded and embraced Islam.

`Abdullah sent to them, "When you hear us call out 'Allahu Akbar', know that we have taken the gates facing the trench, and you take the gates facing the Tigris and say 'Allahu Akbar', killing as many as you can."

When they heard the cries of `Abdullah and his men, they headed towards the gaps that lay behind the Tigris, killing all the Byzantines. None survived from the people of the trench except the nomad tribes.

`Abdullah ibn Al-Mu`tim sent Al-Rab`i ibn Al-Afkal to the two fortresses of Ninevah - the town of Prophet Yunus (peace be upon him) - and to Mosul. Ninevah was the eastern fortress while Mosul was the western fortress. Rab`i ibn Al-Akfal broke through the two fortresses, and the people agreed to pay *jizyah* and were bound to a treaty.

Opening Masibdhan

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas had information that Adhin ibn Al-Hurmuzan had mobilized a large number of Persians and marched with them to the plains. Sa`d wrote to the Commander of the Faithful telling him of these arrangements. `Umar replied, "Send to them Dirar ibn Al-Khattab with

his army. Let Ibn Al-Hudhail Al-Asadi and `Abdullah ibn Wahb Al-Rasi be in the vanguard and the marquees on the two sides of Ibn Al-Hudhail Al-Asadi.

Dirar ibn Al-Khattab ibn Muharib ibn Fahr set out with his army as `Umar had ordered, with Ibn Al-Hudhail in the vanguard, till they reached the plain of Masibdhan.

The two armies confronted each other at Hunduf, a small town near Baghdad between Badhraya and Wasit. They engaged in a tough battle. Dirar ibn Al-Khattab struck Adhin's neck, killing him.

Dirar and his army then resumed their advance till they reached Al-Sairawan. He took Masibdhan by force, so its citizens fled to the mountains seeking refuge. Dirar called them to embrace Islam and they submitted. He remained in Masibdhan till Sa`d moved from Mada'in to Kufa, where he stayed. Sa`d sent to Dirar asking him to

be with him in Kufa. Dirar went to Sa`d, leaving Ibn Al-Hudhail Al-Asadi in charge of Masibdhan.

Opening Qarqisiya'

After Hisham ibn `Utbah had arrived in Mada'in from Jalula', news reached the Muslims that the people of Jazirah [the area of Iraq between the two great rivers] had gathered and united to aid Heraclius against the people of Homs. They had, as well, sent their army to the people of Hit, a town which lay in a lowland on the Euphrates River. It was near Baghdad above Al-Anbar and was famous for its massive palm trees and conveniences of life.

Sa`d wrote to `Umar telling him of this. `Umar replied, "Send to them `Umar ibn Malik with an army. Over the vanguard assign Al-Harith ibn Yazid Al-Amiri, and on the two flanks put Rab`i ibn `Amir and Malik ibn Habib."

`Umar ibn Malik marched with his army towards Hit, and Al-Harith ibn Yazid advanced till he reached a slope of a valley at Hit and saw that the enemy had fortified themselves with a trench.

When `Umar ibn Malik saw how the people were fortified in the trench, they surrounded them for a long time and the leader of the siege was Al-Harith ibn Yazid.

Meanwhile, `Umar ibn Malik proceeded with half his army to block the way of the Persians and to cut the aid and reinforcements from them till he faced them at Qarqisiya'.

`Umar ibn Malik fought a fierce battle with the enemies for a long time till he opened Qarqisiya' by force. Then they accepted to bargain and pay *jizyah*.

Beforehand, `Umar ibn Malik had written to Al-Harith ibn Yazid: "Call them and if they

accept, give them the liberty to leave. Otherwise, dig a trench around theirs and let its opening be in front of you." The people accepted and the soldiers joined those of `Umar ibn Malik. The Persians then returned to their homelands. This was how the Muslims succeeded in opening Iraq, whose people gradually entered the religion of Allah in huge numbers.

The Commander of the Faithful `Umar ibn Al-Khattab sent to Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, "Build a city such that no river or bridge separates it from `Umar."

Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas chose Kufa, which lay between Hirah and the Euphrates and enjoyed land and water and where plants and herbs grew. He also accomplished the building of Basra, whose establishment had a great effect on the rule of caliph. The majority of citizens were of Arab origin, for Kufa was the abode of the Arab tribes coming from the south, while Basra was the abode of those coming from the north.

THE OPENING OF AL-SHAM

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Description

Al-Sham (Greater Syria) is bordered by the Euphrates River on the northeast and by Egypt on the southwest. It extends from the mountains of Tai' in the southeast to the Mediterranean and the Anadol Mountains in the northwest.

Major cities

Its major cities are Damascus, Jerusalem, Nabulus, Homs, Hemah, Halab, Amman, Beirut, Askalan, Gaza, Saida, Sur, Tripoli, Ba`labek, Manbaj and Al-Ma`rah.

Features

Al-Sham is a vast land with an abundance of blessings. It is full of gardens, farms and fields. Fruits are abundant and cheap, and there is generous rain and snow.

Al-Sham is a blessed and sacred land that Allah destined to be the place of revelations, the birthplace of prophets and a refuge for godly men.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the illiterate Arab of the Quraish, stood one day on the minaret, looked towards Al-Sham and said, "O Allah, soften their hearts. Soften their hearts." (Narrated by Ibn `Asakir from Jabir.) He ﷺ also said, "You will win victory over Al-Sham and be defeated for its sake and you will take hold of a fortress on its sea called Anafah, wherein Allah will send twelve thousand martyrs on the Day of Resurrection." (Narrated by Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir* and by Ibn `Asakir from Abi `Umamah.)

A man said, "Choose for me, Messenger of Allah." The Prophet ﷺ answered him, "I choose Al-Sham for you, for it is the place of the best Muslims, and Allah's choicest are from its cities, and Allah chose His elite from its people. If anyone refuses, may he be ruined and suffer from his own disloyalty, for Allah the Almighty promised to

grant me victory over Al-Sham." He added, "Commit yourself to Al-Sham, for it is the best land of Allah wherein are the elite, the best of His servants." (Narrated by Ibn `Asakir.)

Zaid ibn Thabit reported: When we were with the Prophet ﷺ writing down the Qur'an on animal skins, he said, "Blessed be Al-Sham." They said, "Messenger of Allah, why is it blessed?" He replied, "Because the angels of Allah spread their wings over it." (Narrated by ibn Abi Shaibah, Imam Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhi.)

The Mother of the Faithful `A'ishah reported: One day, the Prophet ﷺ woke up terrified saying, "To Allah we belong and to Allah we return." I asked him, "What is wrong? May you be dearer to me than my father and mother!" He answered, "The pillar of Islam was taken from behind my head so I missed it so much. Then I looked and found it fixed in the heart of Al-Sham. A voice told me, 'Muhammad! Allah chose Al-Sham for you for and His servants. He destined it to be a source of

honor to you, a gathering place for your Resurrection, power and reputation. If Allah bestows grace on someone, He lets him live in Al-Sham and grants him some of its blessings. If He is wrathful on someone, He gets an arrow from His quiver that is hung in the center of Al-Sham and shoots him with it so that he will not be happy in this life or in the Hereafter." (Narrated by Ibn `Asakir.)

Agricultural products

The trees of Al-Sham include pine, oak, poplar, olive, palm, walnut, and almond. Grapevines and raspberries grow there, as well as figs, apricots, pears, peaches, plums, oranges, lemons and pomegranates.

Other crops are wheat, oats, lentils, chickpeas, beans, corn and sesame.

Opening Damascus

`Abdul Rahman ibn Ziyad ibn An`am heard `Amr ibn Jabir Al- Hadrami saying that he had heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, "He who takes Damascus as his residence has survived." `Abdul Rahman ibn Ziyad asked `Amr ibn Jabir, "Is this saying narrated from the Prophet?" `Amr ibn Jabir Al-Hadrami replied, "Do you think I narrated on my behalf?" (Narrated by Ibn `Asakir.)

The truthful Prophet ﷺ said, "Truly, Al-Sham will be opened to you, so commit yourselves to a city called Damascus, for it is the best city in Al-Sham. The center of the believers is on a piece of its land called Ghuta, which is their stronghold." (Narrated by Ibn Al-Najjar from Jubair ibn Nafir.)

Damascus: the stronghold of Al-Sham

After Allah the Almighty had granted victory to the Muslims in the Battle of Al-Yarmuk, Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah assigned Bashir ibn Ka`b

ibn Abi Al-Himiari to be the governor of Al-Yarmuk. Afterwards, he advanced till he reached Safar, where he learned that the Byzantine army was in Fihl, a place in Jordan, and that reinforcements had arrived from Homs to help the people of Damascus. Abu `Ubaidah was thus confused whether to start by opening Damascus or Fihl. He wrote to the Commander of the Faithful `Umar asking for his advice.

`Umar replied, "Start by Damascus and begin the fight, for it is the fortress of Al-Sham and the center of sovereignty. Distract the people of Fihl from you by cavalrymen directed towards them and the people of Palastine and Homs as well. If Allah helps us to open it before Damascus, this would please us. Otherwise, if it will not be opened until Damascus is opened, charge someone over Damascus to rule it, leave it and head towards Fihl, you and the rest of the generals raiding it. If Allah grants you victory, you and Khalid go to Homs and

leave Shurahbil and `Amr to be in charge of Jordan and Palestine."

Consequently, Abu `Ubaidah sent to Fihl ten generals of his army. They were: Abu Al-A`war Al-Salmi, `Abd `Amr ibn Yazid ibn `Amir Al-Jarshi, `Amir ibn Khath`amah, `Amr ibn Sa`aq ibn Ka`b, Saifi ibn `Ulbah ibn Shamil, `Amr ibn Al-Habib ibn `Umar, Libdah ibn `Amir ibn Khath`amah, Bishr ibn `Ismah, and `Umarah ibn Makhash, who was assigned as their leader. `Umarah marched with them from Safar till they reached a place near Fihl.

When the Byzantines realized that the Muslim army was heading towards them, they caused the water to gush out all around Fihl, making the land muddy. The Muslims were troubled by this action. The first to be besieged in Al-Sham were the people of Fihl, then those of Damascus.

Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah sent Dhul-Kala` with some soldiers camp in a place between Homs

and Damascus as a protective measure. He also sent `Alqamah ibn Hakim and Masruq with an army to camp between Damascus and Palastine. Khalid ibn Al-Walid advanced with `Amr ibn Al-`As and Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah over his two flanks. The cavalry was under the command of `Iyad and the infantry under Shurahbil.

The Siege of Damascus

Abu `Ubaidah ibn Jarrah and Khalid ibn Al-Walid marched towards Damascus, which was ruled by Nastus ibn Nastus. The Muslims besieged Damascus and surrounded it completely. Abu `Ubaidah surrounded it from one direction, `Amr ibn Al`-As from another, and Mazid from a third position. Meanwhile, Heraclius was in Homs.

The Muslims besieged Damascus for seventy nights. It was a difficult siege, for the Muslims frequently approached and attacked them with arrows and mangonels while the citizens of Damascus sought refuge within and pleaded for aid

and reinforcements from Homs. However, Dhul-Kila` and his army were between Damascus and Homs. When the cavalry of Heraclius came from Homs to reinforce Damascus, the cavalry of Dhul-Kila` attacked them and prevented them from reaching Damascus. They camped on their way.

Hence, the people of Damascus still suffered and waited for support and reinforcements. When they realized that the aid of Heraclius could not reach them, they became weak and feeble, and the Muslims' hope to get hold of them increased. During this time, a son was born to the Patriarch of Damascus. The people were jubilant and feasted, neglecting their positions. However, no Muslims noticed this except Khalid ibn Al-Walid.

Khalid was sleepless; he never slept or let anybody sleep. He was on the alert, sending his spies to pick up information for him. He knew that the people of Damascus were drinking a lot of wine and were drowned in recklessness and joy. He made up his mind to attack the city walls that were

opposite to him at night till he opened the city by force.

When the Byzantines realized this, they hurried to the gates that were opposite to Abu `Ubaidah, opened them for him and said, "Enter and save us from the people of that side!" The people of each gate signed an agreement.

Khalid ibn Al-Walid entered by force and met the leaders at the center of Damascus. He was fighting and pillaging, while the others were tolerant and peaceful. Thus, the people of Damascus reconciled with Khalid, so the city was opened through an agreement. Abu `Ubaidah sent to `Umar telling him of their success. `Umar then wrote to `Ubaidah ordering him to send the army of Iraq to Iraq to join Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas. The opening of Damascus was in the month of Rajab 14 A.H.

Opening Fihl

After Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah succeeded in opening Damascus, he assigned Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan to rule it. He marched to Fihl, putting Khalid ibn Al-Walid over the vanguard and Shurahbil ibn Hasanah - who was in charge of the town of Harb in Jordan - was the general over the people. Over the flanks were Abu `Ubaidah and `Amr ibn Al-`As, over the cavalry was Dirar ibn Al-Azwar, and over the infantry was `Iyad ibn Ghanam.

The citizens of Fihl had left it and camped with their army in Bisan, a city in Jordan in the basin of Sham Al-Ghur Huran and Palastine. Shurahbil ibn Hasanah camped in Fihl separated from the enemy by water and mud.

Abu `Ubaidah wrote to Commander of the Faithful `Umar telling him of the situation. The Muslims were thinking about residing in Fihl peacefully without fighting till they heard from

`Umar. They were unable to advance towards the enemies because of the mud.

The Byzantines, under the command of Saqallar ibn Mikhraq, advanced and attacked the Muslims, who were cautious and alert at all times. They fought fiercely day and night. When it grew dark, the Byzantines retreated and fled after Saqallar and Nastus were badly injured and captured together with their horses by the Muslims. It ended with the defeat of the Byzantines in Fihl.

Opening Bisan and Tabariyah

Shurahbil ibn Hasanah and `Amr ibn Al-`As headed towards Bisan, while Abu Al-A`war Al-Salmi and the generals advanced towards Tabariyah.

The towns of Jordan heard about what had happened in Damascus, the death of Saqallar and Nastus, and the defeat of the Byzantines in Fihl and Raghda.

The Byzantines encountered the army of Shurahbil ibn Hasanah and they fought fiercely before fleeing. The rest of the Byzantines conciliated on the same terms as Damascus, and Shurahbil accepted.

The people of Tabariyah agreed to the same terms as the people of Bisan on the condition that they share the houses with the Muslims. They would leave half the houses for the Muslims and join together in the others. `Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, was informed of the success.

Opening Homs

The city of Homs lay between Halab and Damascus and it was enclosed by a wall. At its southern extreme was a fortified castle on a high hill. The people of Jazirah had sent to the Byzantine king begging him to send armies to Al-Sham and promising to help him. He agreed to their demand.

After Abu `Ubaidah was granted victory in Fihl and had allotted the spoils, he heard about the Byzantines' plans, so he marched with Khalid ibn Al-Walid and his army towards Homs. Abu `Ubaidah consulted Khalid, who advised, "We fight the Byzantines till the coming of the reinforcements."

Some others suggested fortifying themselves. Abu `Ubaidah objected to Khalid's opinion and favored to be fortified in trenches around Homs and wrote to `Umar telling him that the Byzantines were facing him. The people of Homs said, "Keep to your city for they (the Arabs) are bare-footed. If they are afflicted with cold, their feet will be hurt."

When it was winter, the Byzantines lost toes to the severe weather, but no toe fell from a Muslim's foot. When the winter ended, an old Byzantine called his fellowmen to conciliate with the Muslims, but they refused. Another man suggested the same thing but failed as well. The Muslims attacked crying, "Allahu Akbar!" This

caused many houses to collapse and many walls to crack. They cried, "Allahu Akbar!" for the second time and much more damage afflicted the Byzantines.

The people of Homs asked the Muslims for a treaty. The Muslims wondered what had changed their minds, yet they agreed and conciliated with them on the same terms as Damascus.

Abu `Ubaidah sent one fifth of the spoils with `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud to `Umar and made the Companion `Ubadah ibn Al-Samit the governor of Homs.

Opening Al-Jazirah

`Umar wrote to Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, "Allah has granted the Muslims victories in Al-Sham and Iraq, so send the army present with you to Al-Jazirah." The name means "the island" and it was so called because it was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. It was the homeland of the

Mudar and Bakr tribes. It had many towns and various castles. Among its cities were Harran, Al-Riqqah, Ra's Al-`Ain, Nasibin, Mosul and others. `Umar added, "Let the leader be one of three: Khalid ibn `Arfatah, Hashim ibn `Utbah or `Iyad ibn Ghanam."

When the message of the Commander of the Faithful `Umar reached Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, he mobilized an army including Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari, `Umar ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, and `Uthman ibn Abi Al-`As ibn Bishr Al-Thaqafi, with `Iyad ibn Ghanam as the leader.

`Iyad and his army arrived at Rahta', whose people negotiated with him and settled a treaty. The people of Harran agreed to *jizyah,* too. `Iyad sent Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari to Nasibin. He also directed `Umar ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas to Ra's Al-`Ain with some cavalry to protect the rear of the Muslims from the Byzantines.

`Iyad himself marched with the rest of the army towards Dara, a city on a mountainside between Nasibin and Mardin. It had once been the camp of Dara the son of King Dara the son of King Qubadh, who fought with and was killed by Alexander and whose daughter Alexander then married. `Iyad camped there and fought slightly, then opened it while Abu Musa opened Nasibin. Everything the Muslims had taken by force from Al-Jazirah was returned to the people. Thus, Al-Jazirah was the easiest to open.

Opening Antioch

Abu `Ubaidah marched to Antioch, which some armies of Qunsurin had overtaken. When he reached Mahrawiyah, which was two leagues from Antioch, he was confronted by a group of the enemy, whom he succeeded to disperse and send fleeing to the city. He surrounded the city, then its people agreed with him to pay *jizyah* and to be evacuated. Some of them departed while others remained, and he granted them security. However,

they broke the pact and he fought them till he opened it again.

Opening Halab

When Abu `Ubaidah had opened Qunsurin and made peace with its people on the same conditions as Homs, he proceeded towards Halab. Then he received the news that the people of Qunsurin had violated the treaty and betrayed, so he sent some armies to teach them a lesson.

Abu `Ubaidah then resumed the march with his army till he reached the borders of Halab, where he camped. Various groups of the Arabs went to him and reconciled with him to pay *jizyah,* then later declared their Islam.

Then he attacked Halab with `Iyad ibn Ghanam Al-Fahri as the leader of his army. The citizens fortified themselves and the Muslims laid siege to them. After a while, the people of Halab were unable to endure the siege and asked to be

secured and reconciled with the Muslims, asking for the safety of their souls, city, churches and forts.

It was said that Abu `Ubaidah did not see any of its citizens because they had moved to Antioch and sent to him asking for reconciliation. When Abu `Ubaidah reconciled with them, they returned to their city. As for its castle, it was besieged by the Muslims for four months or more. Some Muslims were killed on the way to it. Abu `Ubaidah wrote to Caliph `Umar:

> In the name of Allah the Most Merciful, the Ever Merciful. To the servant of Allah, the Commander of the Faithful `Umar ibn Al-Khattab from his governor in Al-Sham, Abu `Ubaidah. Peace be upon you. I thank Allah and pray for His Messenger ﷺ. Commander of the Faithful, Allah - glory be to Him - has opened through our hands the

city of Qunsurin and the army of Nabibin launched several raids on the cities. Allah opened Halab for us through reconciliation, yet its castle was hard for us to assail. It has many people in it together with the patriarch, who schemed against us several times, killing many of our men who were thus rewarded with martyrdom, and may Allah punish him rightly. We tried to trick him but failed, and I have thought about retreating and lifting the siege and going to the cities between Halab and Antioch. I am waiting for your reply. Peace be upon you and on all the Muslims.

`Umar replied:

I have received the letter sent by your messengers and I was pleased at what I heard of the openings and

the victory over your enemies as well as those who achieved martyrdom. As for what you mentioned about going to the cities between Halab and Antioch, retreating from besieging the castle and its inhabitants, I perceive this to be a wrong decision. How could you leave a man whose residence you have approached and taken hold of his city? The retreat will cause all the others to think you failed before him and did not face him. This will certainly defame you and give him fame and good reputation. Besides, this action will give an opportunity for those who are keen to get hold of you and give the Byzantine leaders and common people a chance to infringe upon you, and the spies will go back and write to their kings about your weak

position. Or leave him till Allah helps you to kill him or till he surrenders to you - Allah willing - or till Allah passes His judgment, for He is the best Judge.

So spread your cavalry in the plains, the dangerous places, the narrow places, the wide areas, the mountains and the valleys. Launch raid after raid. If any demand conciliation, accept it from them, and if any ask for peace, grant them peace. May Allah be our guardian for you and the Muslims. I will send this letter of mine with a group of Hadramaut and others, as well as some chiefs from Yemen of those who dedicated themselves to Allah and are seeking jihad for Allah's sake. They are cavalrymen and bold Arabs and the reinforcements will

reach you one after the other, Allah willing. Peace be upon you.

`Umar sealed the letter and gave it to `Abdullah ibn Qurt and Jadah ibn Jubair, the two messengers of `Ubaidah to `Umar. The reinforcements reached Abu `Ubaidah and among them was one of the servants of Banu Tariff who was of the ruling family of Kindah called Damis. He was known as The Man of Horrors, a name that he deserved. He was black, very tall and a bold warrior widely known in the land of Kindah.

When Damis saw how the castle was fortified, he pondered to find a means to enter the stronghold.

Finally he determined to climb the fortress with some Muslims, so he did. They found the gate guards asleep, so they killed them. Then they proceeded to the second gate, whose guards were also asleep. They killed the guards, thus opening the two doors and permitting the army to enter.

They fought hard. Khalid entered the castle with his advancing army, and also Dirar ibn Al-Azwar got in.

When the Byzantines saw the Muslim army, they realized that they would not endure to fight them, so they dropped their weapons saying, "Help! Help!" and stopped fighting. Thus, the Muslims restrained themselves.

Meanwhile, Abu `Ubaidah came with the Muslim soldiers. Khalid ibn Al-Walid said, "Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah, the Byzantines plead for peace and we have stopped assaulting them till you come and issue your orders."

Abu `Ubaidah asked them to embrace Islam and some of their chiefs did. Consequently, Abu `Ubaidah gave them their possessions and people back.

He spared the peasants from death or capture. He took oaths from them to be like the people who

set an agreement or accepted to pay *jizyah*. This meant that they had to keep their promises and respect the agreement. Then he let them go out of the castle

The Muslims kept discussing Damis and his schemes and treated his wounds till they healed. Abu `Ubaidah rewarded generously from what Allah had bestowed on them.

THE OPENING
OF JERUSALEM

THE OPENING OF JERUSALEM

It was previously called Iliya'.

Dhul Isba` said, "Messenger of Allah, if we live after you are deceased, where do you order us to go?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Go to Jerusalem, perhaps Allah will give you offspring that go back and forth to it." And in another wording, "Perhaps you will have children who go to that mosque and come from it." And in another wording, "Perhaps you will have children to go to that mosque and come." (Narrated by Ibn Zinjawih and Ibn Nafi`, Al-Tabarani in *Al-Kabir,* and by Ibn Al-Najjar.)

Abu Dhar Al-Ghiffari said, "Messenger of Allah, which is better, the prayers in this mosque of yours or the prayers in (the mosque) of Jerusalem?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Prayers in my mosque are better than four prayers in Jerusalem, though it is the best place to pray, for it is the land of Resurrection. A time will come when if a man can

see Jerusalem through the loop with which he hangs his whip [i.e. it is very close to him], it will be better for him than all the pleasures of this world."

Maimunah, the servant of the Prophet, said, "Tell us about Jerusalem, Messenger of Allah!" He ﷺ said, "The land of Resurrection and gathering. Go to it and pray there, for prayers in it equal a thousand prayers in any other mosque." Maimunah asked, "What if one can't go to it?" The Prophet ﷺ answered her, "The one who cannot go to it can dedicate lamp oil to be lit in it, for the one who donates is like the one who prays." (Narrated by Abu Dawud, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Zinjawih from Maimunah the servant of the Prophet.)

Dispatching the Army to Jerusalem

Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah sent seven armies, each headed by a general. He assigned five thousand horsemen to each and a banner for each leader. Thus, the total army was thirty-five

thousand cavalry. The generals were Khalid ibn Al-Walid, Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan, Shurahbil ibn Hasanah, Al-Mirqal ibn Hashim ibn `Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas, Qais ibn Hubairah Al-Muradi, Al-Musaiab ibn Najiyah Al-Fazazi and `Urwah ibn Muhalhil ibn Zaid Al-Khail.

The cavalrymen of Shurahbil were from Yemen. Abu `Ubaidah ordered Al-Mirqal ibn Hashim to go to the fort and he went by himself.

The seven generals each marched on his own. Every day, a general marched with his army scheming to terrify and puzzle the enemy. The first to advance with the banner was Khalid ibn Al-Walid, who cried, "Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!" when he attacked.

The army of Khalid raised their voices crying, "Allahu Akbar!" When the people of Jerusalem heard the tumult of their voices, they were terrified and puzzled. They mounted the walls of the city to look and, discovering that the Muslims were small

in number, they underestimated and belittled them. The Byzantines thought that these were all the Muslims. Khalid and his army were camping near Ariha.

On the second day, Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan proceeded. On the third day Shurahbil ibn Hasanah advanced, followed on the fourth day by Al-Mirqal ibn Hashim. The fifth day witnessed the coming of Al-Musaib ibn Najiyah, and on the sixth came Qais ibn Hubairah. Finally, on the seventh day came `Urwah ibn Al-Muhalhil ibn Zaid Al-Khail from the road to Ramlah.

The March

The armies camped at Jerusalem for three days without any fight or assault. The Muslims did not see or talk to any of the Byzantines. However, the citizens fortified their walls with mangonels, swords, leather shields and armor of the best kinds. Al-Musaib ibn Najiyah reported: We never before went to any city of Al-Sham and saw such finery

and such arrangements like those of Jerusalem. We never surrounded any people but they were pleading to us because of the terror and horror that they felt except those people of Jerusalem, for we camped near them for three days, yet none of them talked to us or moved."

On the fourth day one of the Bedouins said to Shurahbil ibn Hasanah, "O general! Those people seem as if they are deaf or dumb or blind. Let's march towards them."

When it was the fifth day, after the Muslims had performed the Fajr Prayer, the first general to mount his horse to talk to the people of Jerusalem was Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan. He drew his sword and approached their wall. He took a translator with him to interpret their speech. Yazid stood facing their wall so that they could hear him talking, but they were silent when he said to his translator, "Tell them, the leader of the Arabs tells you: What about answering the call to Islam and to the word of faith 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad

is the Messenger of Allah.' On that account Allah will pardon your previous sins and you will thus save your souls. If you refuse and do not comply, reconcile with us on behalf of your city, as did other people than you, who were more powerful than you. If you refuse both alternatives, you will be doomed to ruin and Hell will be your dwelling."

The translator advanced and said to them, "This general calls you to one of three choices: entering Islam, *jizyah* or war." One of the priests replied, "We will not quit the religion of honor. Killing us is better to us than this."

Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan returned to the other generals of the army and told them the priest's answer, then said, "What causes us to wait?"

They said, "Abu `Ubaidah did not order us to attack or fight those people. We will write to the 'Guardian of the Nation' Abu `Ubaidah." So Yazid wrote to him about the reply of the people, asking him what the next step was.

Abu `Ubaidah replied ordering them to advance and telling them that he would follow them soon after that letter.

When the generals read the message of Abu `Ubaidah, they were pleased, hopeful and waited for the morning. Each one of them wanted the opening to be done by his own hands and enjoy praying in Jerusalem and looking at the relics of the prophets (peace be upon them all). When Fajr was announced, the people performed the prayers and Yazid recited Allah's words that mean

> ❮O my people, enter the Sacred Land which Allah has destined for you to enter, and do not turn back or you will be losers.❯
>
> (Al-Ma'ida 5: 21)

When the prayers were done they cried "To arms! To arms! Horses of Allah, ride!"

The first to launch the attack were the men of Himyar and Yemen. The Muslims fought resolutely as if they were fearless lions. The people of Jerusalem observed the Muslims excited to fight them, so they shot them with arrows, which the Muslims caught on their leather shields. The fighting lasted from morning till sunset. When the sun set, the two parties retreated to their former positions and the Muslims prayed the prayers that they had missed during the day.

The Arrival of Abu `Ubaidah

The Muslims spent the night restoring their condition, eating and taking some sleep and rest. In the morning, the archers advanced and showered arrows on the people of Jerusalem while praising Allah and pleading to Him. The battle continued this way for several days, and on the eleventh day, Abu `Ubaidah arrived with his troops, and his standard was held by his servant Salim. The cavalrymen surrounded him from all sides with their banners. The women and money came as

well. The people were jubilant and their excitement in praising and thanking Allah terrified the citizens of Jerusalem. Patriarch Sophronius went to the wall that was in the direction from which Abu `Ubaidah had come, but the wall was so high. A man who accompanied the patriarch cried out, "O you Muslims! Cease the fight so that we can ask you and clarify some issues."

The Muslims ceased. A man spoke to them in good Arabic, "You had better know that the characteristics of the man who will open this city of ours - Jerusalem - and all of our lands are known to us. If we find these characteristics in your general, we will surrender to you and stop fighting. Otherwise, we will never surrender and we will resume the fight."

On hearing this, some of the Muslims went to Abu `Ubaidah and told him what they heard. Abu `Ubaidah approached the Byzantines. Patriarch Sophronius looked at him and said, "He is not the man meant." Then he looked at his army and cried,

"Rejoice and fight for the sake of your city, religion and women!" Then they resumed the battle. Sophronius returned without speaking even a single word to Abu `Ubaidah. The Muslims were harsh in their fight against the Byzantines.

The battle was fierce day after day till four whole months passed away. The Muslims endured very cold weather, snow and heavy rain. When the people of Jerusalem realized how firmly the Muslims encircled them, they went to Patriarch Sophronius and told him of their hardships and asked him to negotiate with the Muslims and learn their demands.

The patriarch climbed the wall with them, overlooking the place where Abu `Ubaidah was. One of the Byzantines cried, "O you Arabs! The Patriarch of Christianity and the executor of its laws has come to talk to you, so let your leader come forward." Abu `Ubaidah was told what they said and replied, "I will go to him."

He then went with some generals, fellows and a translator and stood by the patriarch. The Byzantine translator said, "What is it that you want from us in such a holy city that the one who schemes against it will expose himself to God's wrath?"

Abu `Ubaidah said, "Yes, it is an honorable city from which our Prophet rose to Heaven. We deserve it more than you do, and we will fight you till Allah helps us to dominate it, as He did to other cities."

The patriarch asked, "What do you want from us?"

Abu `Ubaidah answered, "One of three: first, to admit that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. If you declare so, you will enjoy the rights we have and be liable to judgment as we are."

"It is a great declaration and we would utter it except that we do not believe that your Prophet Muhammad is a messenger. This choice we will not select. What is the second one?"

"You reconcile with us on behalf of your city, paying *jizyah* whether you like it or not, as other people of Al-Sham did."

"It is recorded in our book that the one who will open this city, Jerusalem, is a Companion of Muhammad called `Umar known as Al-Faruq, who distinguishes between right and falsehood. He is known to be a firm man who does not fear the blame of anyone in things concerning Allah. We, however, do not see his characteristics among you."

When Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah heard this, he smiled and said, "We have opened the city by the Lord of Ka`bah." Then he drew nearer and asked, "Can you recognize the man if you see him?"

The patriarch answered, "Certainly, how can I mistake him while I have full knowledge about his merit, life and office?"

Abu `Ubaidah said, "He is our caliph and the Companion of our Prophet. I swear to this by the name of Allah."

"If it is as you say, you have thus realized the truthfulness of our talk. Save our blood and send to your caliph to come. If we see him and recognize him, and ascertain his characteristics and merits, we will open the city for him without any troubles or sorrow and we will pay *jizyah*."

"I would prefer to fight, or shall we cease the battle?"

"O you Arabs! Can't you stop your harshness? How can we tell you that we believe you and demand a cessation of fighting and you aim at nothing but fighting?"

Abu `Ubaidah said, "Yes, because this is more worthy to us than life, for it is the way by which we ask for the pardon and forgiveness of our Lord." He then ordered the fight against the people of Jerusalem to cease and the patriarch left.

Abu `Ubaidah's Message to `Umar

Abu `Ubaidah wrote a message to `Umar, the Commander of the Faithful:

> In the name of Allah the Most Merciful, the Ever Merciful. To the servant of Allah, the Commander of the Faithful `Umar ibn Al-Khattab from the general assigned by him, Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah. Peace be on you. I thank Allah the One and Only God and pray for His Prophet Muhammadﷺ. It is worth mentioning, Commander of the Faithful, that we have remained four months fighting against the people

of Jerusalem. Every day we attacked them and they attacked us. On that very day on which I wrote this letter, their patriarch, whom they highly regard, came to us and said that they have in their books that none will open their city except the Companion of our Prophet who is called `Umar. He added that he knows his characteristics and description, which are recorded in their books. He asked us to stop the bloodshed. So, come to us yourself and rescue us. May Allah open this city to us by your own hands.

He signed and sealed the message and then Maisarah ibn Masruq Al-Abasi took it to deliver it to `Umar.

The Caliph Consults His Companions

When `Umar received Abu `Ubaidah's message, he consulted his companions. `Uthman ibn `Affan said, "Commander of the Faithful, do not go to Al-Sham. I suggest resuming the battle."

`Ali ibn Abi Talib held the opposite view. "Commander of the Faithful, go, and may you be accompanied by grace and blessings."

`Umar took `Ali's advice and ordered the Muslims to march with him. `Umar then went to the Prophet's mosque and prayed four *rak`ahs*, then he went to the Prophet's grave and greeted him and Abu Bakr. He then assigned `Ali to be his successor in Madinah.

Afterwards, `Umar left Madinah seen off by its people. He rode a red camel, and on its back were two sacks, one containing fine flour and the other containing dates. In front of `Umar was a

waterskin and behind him a bag containing some bread.

`Umar headed towards Jerusalem. Whenever he rested somewhere, he did not leave it unless he prayed Fajr. When he finished he looked at the Muslims and said, "All praise to Allah Who dignified us through Islam and honored us through faith and distinguished us by His Prophet ﷺ. He the Almighty led us to guidance after error, united us on the word of piety though we had been enemies, removed any hatred from our hearts, granted us victory over our enemy, gave us sovereignty in our land, and made us brothers, loving and caring about each other. So thank Allah, you servants of Allah, for these countless blessings and manifest gifts, for Allah multiplies for those desirous who strive more for what He has and he completes His blessings on those who thank Him."

`Umar Arrives at Al-Sham

When Abu `Ubaidah knew that `Umar was approaching Al-Sham, he went to welcome him together with some of the Muhajirun and Ansar. When they reached `Umar, he looked at Abu `Ubaidah, who was dressed in his armor, with a garment made of silk and cotton and holding his bow while riding his camel. When they saw each other, they stopped their camels, dismounted and approached each other. Abu `Ubaidah stretched out his hand to sake hands with `Umar, then they embraced each other. The Muslims then came one after the other to greet `Umar, then they all rode their camels and horses. `Umar and Abu `Ubaidah went ahead talking together till they reached Jerusalem. When they arrived there, `Umar led the Mulims in the Fajr Prayer.

`Umar's Humbleness and Austerity

`Umar rode his camel wearing a garment with fourteen patches, some of which were of skin. The

Muslims said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, what about riding a horse instead of your camel and wearing good white clothes instead of these patched ones?" `Umar accepted the suggestion and wore white clothes. Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam reported: I perceived the clothes were Egyptian and were worth fifteen dirhams.

`Umar put on his shoulder a linen scarf that was neither new nor old. A gray work horse that had once belonged to the Byzantines was brought to him. When `Umar rode it, the horse started to sway with `Umar on its back. Seeing this, `Umar dismounted quickly saying, "Raise me from my fall! May Allah raise you from your falls on the Day of Resurrection, for your leader was about to be ruined by the vanity and conceit that penetrated his heart. I heard Allah's Messenger say, 'He shall not enter Paradise who has pride in his heart that weighs even a speck of a dust.'" (Narrated by Muslim from Ibn Mas`ud.) `Umar then hit the horse's face and said, "May the one who taught

you such vanity be a failure." Then he added, "Your white garment and the swaying horse could have ruined me."

`Umar took off the white garment and put on again his patched and shabby clothes. He then headed towards `Aqaba to leave from there to Jerusalem.

The Commander of the Faithful `Umar Al-Faruq encountered a group the Muslims wearing silk garments. He ordered dust to be thrown in their faces and their garments to be torn off. He then proceeded till he reached Jerusalem. He looked at it and said, "Allahu Akbar! O Allah, let this opening be an easy one and grant us victory and sovereignty from You."

Then he went on and was met by the tribes, chiefs and others till he rested in the place where Abu `Ubaidah had once camped. A woolen tent was pitched for him, wherein he sat on the dusty ground, then stood and prayed four *rak`ahs*.

`Umar Goes to Meet the Patriarch

When the Commander of the Faithful reached Jerusalem, the Muslims cried out loudly, "There is no god but Allah! Allahu Akbar!" The clamor was heard by the people of Jerusalem. The patriarch exclaimed, "What is the cause of this tumult?" He was answered, "`Umar, the Commander of the Faithful has come from Madinah to Jerusalem."

The next day, `Umar led the Muslims in the Fajr Prayer and then said to Abu `Ubaidah, "Proceed to the people and inform them of my arrival."

Abu `Ubaidah advanced and cried to them, "O people of this city! Our leader has come, so what will you do regarding your claims?"

The patriarch left his church with a crowd, mounted the wall and looked at Abu `Ubaidah, who said, "The Commander of the Faithful, who

has no leader above him, has come." The patriarch asked to see him.

`Umar was determined to go but was stopped by his companions who said, "Commander of the Faithful, will you go alone by yourself without any arms except this patched attire? We are worried about you lest they should betray or deceive and harm you."

`Umar replied with the Qur'anic verse meaning

> ﴾Say, "Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has preordained for us, He is our Protector, in Allah let the believers put all their trust.﴿
>
> (Taubah 9: 51)

The Companion of Muhammad ibn `Abdullah

`Umar's camel was brought to him and he mounted it dressed in his patched garment. This was due to his humbleness (May Allah be pleased with him) for he was capable of wearing the best and richest attire and to ride the best sort of horses and to be adorned with the most exclusive ornaments. However, he abstained from all this, taking as his example the honorable Prophet ﷺ who led to all goodness. Again we say that `Umar had his only patched garment and he bound his head with a piece of a cotton cloth. No one accompanied him but Abu `Ubaidah, who walked by him till `Umar Al-Faruq approached the wall and stood by it.

The patriarch looked at him and recognized him to be the one meant, then he said to the people of Jerusalem, "Conclude an agreement and treaty with him, for truly, this is the Companion of Muhammad ibn `Abdullah." Consequently, they

opened the door and hurried towards `Umar, asking him for an agreement of safety.

On seeing this, `Umar praised Allah, humbled himself to Him and bowed down on the saddle of his camel as much as its hump allowed him. Then he dismounted and said to them, "Go back to your city and you will be given a treaty of security if you ask for it and agree to pay *jizyah*." The people returned to their city without closing its gates. `Umar returned to his troops and spent the night among them.

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab in Jerusalem

On entering Jerusalem, `Umar said, "Here I am, Allah, at Your service!" (Narrated by Ibn Rahwih and Al-Baihaqi from `Abbad ibn `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair)

The next day, `Umar entered Jerusalem fearing nobody and nothing. It was Monday and he stayed in Iliya' till he prayed Jum`ah Prayers. Till

Friday he designated a *mihrab* [to show the direction of the Qiblah] at the eastern side, which is the place of his mosque. He prayed with his companions the Jum`ah Prayer, and the Muslims did not take anything of the possessions of the natives. `Umar stayed in Jerusalem for ten days.

Afterwards, he departed to Madinah, the city of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, after having concluded a treaty with Jerusalem agreeing to pay *jizyah*. He marched with the troops that accompanied him to Jabiyah, where he stayed for some time. He divided Al-Sham into two zones. Abu `Ubaidah was in charge of the zone from Huran to Halab and what followed it. He ordered him to advance towards Halab and to fight its people till Allah granted him victory and allowed him to open it. Palestine, Jerusalem and the coasts were under Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan.

He concluded the treaty with "The witnesses to this are Khalid ibn Al-Walid, `Amr ibn Al-`As, `Abdul Rahman ibn `Auf and Mu`awiyah ibn Abi

Sufyan. Registered and done in the fifteenth year of Hijrah."

Afterwards `Umar asked Ka`b Al-Akbar, the chief Rabbi, "Where do you think I can pray?"

He answered him, "If you would take my word, pray behind the dome; thus you will have all Jerusalem in front of you."

`Umar said, "You have surpassed the Jews. No, I will pray where the Prophet ﷺ prayed."

He advanced towards the Qiblah and prayed. Then he spread his garment and collected the garbage in it and the people followed him. (Narrated by Imam Ahmad in *Al-Diya' Al-Maqdisi* in the selection from `Ubaid ibn Adam.)

THE OPENING OF EGYPT

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The Condition of Egypt under the Byzantines

Generally speaking, Egypt suffered from severe poverty because its harvest and other products were sent to the cities of the Byzantine Empire. This was done by its rulers so that they could have the full satisfaction of the supreme sovereign, the Emperor. He was satisfied so long that the Egyptians were deprived of these blessings and harvest.

The Egyptians were ready for any kind of rebellion against the Byzantine rulers, who imposed taxes and unfair tributes in addition to forcing them to follow their doctrines and believe in a certain religion. Thus, the Egyptians were fed up and could not endure the Byzantine domination any more. Finally, some divisions took place within the Byzantine state, splitting it internally into numerous sects and parties.

`Amr ibn Al-`As Asks Permission to Open Egypt

`Amr used to go to Egypt for trade before Islam, so he knew how its people suffered from poverty and weakness. In addition, he had full knowledge of its resources and crops.

So when `Umar came to Al-Sham to open Jerusalem, `Amr ibn Al-`As came to him and said, "Commander of the Faithful, permit me to advance on Egypt, for if we open it, its harvest and fortunes will be a source of power and help to the Muslims. This is because the Egyptian land is the richest land and its people are now too feeble to fight or struggle."

On hearing this, `Umar felt uneasy and said, "This could jeopardize the Muslims."

He said so because the Muslims had not yet established themselves in the cities that they had opened. In addition, their troops were distributed

here and there in Al-Sham, Iraq, Armenia and so forth. Added to this, many of them had died of the plague of `Amwas. `Umar was hesitant because he did not want to entangle the Muslims in a new battle when they had not recovered yet from those of Al-Sham.

However, `Amr was persuasive and excellent in expressing himself. He mentioned that Artabun, the cunning Byzantine general, had fled to Egypt when he realized the intentions of the people of Jerusalem to reconcile with the Muslims. He added that the king was certainly mobilizing the army to resume the struggle against the Arabs. `Amr convinced `Umar that the public interest required the invasion of Egypt to hamper the Byzantines from mobilizing their troops.

`Amr asked his commander `Umar, "Didn't you hear the saying of Allah's Messenger in which he said, 'If Allah helps you to open Egypt, adopt many soldiers from it, for they are the best soldiers on earth.' Abu Bakr said, 'Why are they the best,

Messenger of Allah?' He answered, 'Because they and their wives are tightly bound to each other till the Day of Resurrection.'" (Narrated by Ibn `Abdul Hakam in *Fath Misr* and by Ibn `Asakir from `Umar.)

Abu `Abdullah `Amr ibn Al-`As kept on persuading `Umar about the opening and planning for it. He suggested marching towards Egypt with an army of four thousand only. `Umar assented and gave him the permission, telling him that he would send to him a final message bearing his opinion on his way to Egypt.

`Amr ibn Al-`As Advances towards Egypt

After `Umar had approved `Amr's plan, he mustered four or five thousand soldiers, saying to him, "March forth, for I have asked Allah's guidance regarding this issue. My message will reach you soon, Allah willing. If you receive a message from me in which I order you to turn away from Egypt before entering it or any of its lands,

you have to obey the order and discontinue the march. If you enter it before you receive my message, go ahead and seek Allah's aid and pray to Him to grant you victory."

`Amr marched with the troops in the middle of the night and none of the Muslims discovered the departure. `Umar had previously consulted with the senior Companions. `Uthman ibn `Affan saw that this was a grave issue and mentioned that `Amr was apt to be rash and audacious.

After talking with them, `Umar was once more hesitant. He feared that his message might not reach `Amr until after he had already entered Egypt. Hence, his return would badly affect the reputation of the Arabs and of Islam. He thus wrote to him, "If you receive my message before entering Egypt, return; or else, proceed. May Allah bless you."

The Shrewd `Amr

`Umar's message reached `Amr ibn Al-`As when he was in Rafah. Guessing that the message was an order to stop the advance, `Amr used his wit and did not receive the message till he reached Arish.

Only then did he summon the messenger of the Commander of the Faithful, take the message and read it. Then he asked his men, "Are we now in Egypt or Palestine?"

"We are in Egypt," they replied.

`Amr continued, "So, we shall resume our plan as the commander ordered us." `Amr opened Arish easily with no effort, for its fortresses were not strong and the guards were few.

Opening Suez (Al-Farama)

The city of Farama was the first city where the Muslims fought with Byzantines. It was fortified,

but `Amr besieged it for a month. Then the Muslims opened it by force, killing and capturing many Byzantines while the others fled. The historians Al-Maqrizi and Abul Mahasin narrated that the Christians of Farama helped the Muslims against the Byzantines in that battle.

Opening Bilbis

After Allah had granted them victory in Farama, `Amr ibn Al-`As advanced to Sanhur and Tanis, then Bilbis, which was a fortified city in which the Byzantines posted an immerse army under the command of the Byzantine general Artabun, who previously had been the general of Jerusalem.

`Amr sent to the commander, telling him to choose between Islam, *jizyah* or war. He gave him a respite of four days to send his reply. However, the cunning Byzantine chose betrayal and conspiracy over forwardness and honesty. On the second day of the respite, he took the Muslims by

surprise, but Allah the Almighty granted victory to His servants, who succeeded in killing a thousand and capturing three thousand. Among the captives was the daughter of Al-Muqauqis, who ruled Egypt under the orders of Heraclius. `Amr returned her to her father unharmed and dignified. Al-Muqauqis highly regarded this action of `Amr.

The city of Bilbis remained under siege for a month till the Muslims opened it and the Byzantines were badly defeated.

The Battle of `Ain Shams

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab sent reinforcements of more than eight thousand men, thus increasing the Muslims in might and main. `Amr camped with his army at `Ain Shams with the target of dragging the Byzantines away from their forts to the open. He split his troops into three divisions.

One division camped at `Ain Shams under his leadership. Another was at Umm Danin, and the

third was in the hills facing the castle under the leadership of Kharjah ibn Hudhafah. Thus, the Byzantine army was surrounded by two divisions of the Muslims - a plot that they were ignorant of - in order for the third to swoop down on them when the orders were issued.

The Byzantine army had more than twenty thousand soldiers under their general, Theodore. The leaders of the cavalry were Teodisius and Anastasius. Theodore marched with his cavalrymen and infantry towards the Muslim army.

The two armies confronted each other in the location of `Abassiyah midway between `Ain Shams and Umm Danin. They fought hard, for each army sought to conclude the battle in its favor.

While the battle was proceeding desperately, the third division of the Muslim army led by Kharjah ibn Hudhafah, which had been lying in wait behind the hills, attacked. They pounced on the rear of the Byzantine army like a raging storm.

The enemy was thus hemmed in on both sides. They were confused, distracted and terrified. They fled to Umm Danin but were assaulted by the Muslims camping there, so they were stunned at the surprise. Some Byzantines sought refuge in the castle by land while others fled by boats to the fort of Babylon, but many of them were killed. The Muslims took hold of Umm Danin again and killed all of its guards except for three hundred who succeeded in escaping to the fort of Babylon.

From `Ain Shams to Fustat

Some guards of Umm Danin fled by boats till they reached Niqius, a town between Fustat and Alexandria. The Muslims seized the riverbanks to the north and south of the fort and moved their camp from `Ain Shams to Fustat.

When the tidings of the Muslim victory reached the Byzantines, the Byzantine army evacuated Fayum at night and marched towards Abwat, from which they fled by boats to Kariun

without telling the people of Abwat that they had abandoned Fayum to their enemies, the Muslims.

When `Amr knew this, he sent an army to occupy Fayum and Abwat. The battle of `Ain Shams lasted for fifteen days till Fayum was opened. This was in the year 19 A.H.

Opening the Fort of Babylon

Al-Muqauqis, the patriarch and ruler of Egypt under Emperor Heraclius, and the general of his army, Theodore, sat in the fort of Babylon, which was called the Palace of Candles because at the beginning of every month, many candles were lit in it. When the sun penetrated one of the towers, candles were lit that night on the top of the castle so that people would know that the sun had moved from that tower to another one. This fort and castle lay opposite the city of Manf, which was the residence of Al-Muqauqis overlooking the Nile and facing the island of Rudah. Manf was a fortified city that was hard to defeat because it was near the

capital. The Byzantines stayed in it for a long time accompanied by the distinguished army.

`Amr ibn Al-`As and his troops camped in front of the fortress and besieged it for seven months. During the siege, Al-Muqauqis sent his messengers to `Amr asking for a reconciliation. `Amr gave him the choice of Islam, *jizyah* or fighting. Al-Muqauqis chose to pay *jizyah* and wrote to Heraclius asking for his permission. Heraclius, however, objected and was furious with him and rebuked him severely. After that, he summoned him to Constantinople, then banished him.

`Amr ibn Al-`As then wrote to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab telling him that Allah the Almighty had granted them victory and opened Egypt for them. He told him as well that he reached Fayum and Abwat. He also asked for reinforcements because he concluded that the remaining army was not sufficient.

`Umar reinforced him with four thousand men. At the head of each thousand was a man who was equal to a thousand by himself. These four vigorous men were Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam, Al-Miqdad ibn `Amr, `Ubadah ibn Al-Samit and Muslimah ibn Mukhlid. In his message to `Amr, `Umar said, "You had better know that you have twelve thousand soldiers and these twelve thousand will not be defeated because of their small number."

When the opening of Fort Babylon was slow, Al-Zubair ibn Al- `Awwam said, "I sacrifice my soul to Allah and I hope this may help the Muslims."

`Amr ibn Al-`As was besieging the fort of Babylon. Then one night they climbed its walls and fought with its soldiers in a difficult encounter. The first to climb was Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam. He placed a ladder on the side facing Suq Al-Hamam, then climbed and ordered the Muslims to storm into the fort when they heard him cry, "Allahu Akbar!" and saw him holding his sword. Hearing his

exclamation of "Allahu Akbar", the Muslims repeated after him from outside the fort. The Byzantines inside were certain by these voices that the Muslims had already broken into the fort, so they fled. Thus, Al-Zubair, the disciple of Allah's Prophet, entered with his companions and opened the gates. The Muslims at once rushed in and opened it by force.

However, `Amr made an agreement with them that they would depart from the fort within three days. The Byzantines had to go to the Nile carrying enough food that could last with them for some days. The fort and the arms and weapons it contained were the gain of the Muslims. Afterwards, `Amr demolished the towers and walls of the fortress.

THE OPENING OF ALEXANDRIA



THE OPENING OF ALEXANDRIA

`Amr ibn Al-`As Advances to Alexandria

`Amr ordered his army to march towards Alexandria. Thus they would pass by Niqius, a city on the branch of the Nile called Rashid. It had enjoyed fame since the time of the Pharaohs for its strategic importance.

`Amr determined to proceed with the army via the western branch of the Nile or the desert to prevent the troops from facing any obstacle that would hinder their progress. Besides, the eastern bank of the Nile was full of canals in the delta.

Meanwhile the Byzantine general, Theodore, had put the army that was in Niqius under the command of Domentianus, who had a large fleet of ships arranged to defend this city.

When the Muslims drew near, this commander fled in fear by boat to Alexandria. It was said that he was feeble and cowardly. When the guards realized that their commander Domentianus had betrayed them, the soldiers of Niqius dropped their weapons and rushed into the river terrified, aiming to reach the boats. None of them thought of anything but to save his own soul and flee to his home. At that time, the Muslims had no choice but to attack them, killing and injuring. They thus succeeded in entering Niqius smoothly without strong confrontation. `Amr stayed in Niqius for some days.

Before resuming the march to Alexandria, `Amr sent a company led by Shuraik ibn Sumai to pursue the Byzantines. `Amr then proceeded with his troops till they reached Dilinjat, from which he moved with his army northward to Damanhour. He encountered the Byzantines in Sultais, which was six miles south of Damanhour. The Muslims attacked the Byzantines severely, and they fought

till the enemy fled, allowing `Amr to get hold of Damanhour easily.

Seizing Kariun

Again the two armies encountered each other in a severe battle that lasted for not less than ten days in Kariun. `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As was in the van of the army, carrying their standard, and was badly injured.

Kariun was the last in a chain of forts that lay between Babylon and Alexandria. Although the Byzantines had fortified it, it was less in might and arms than the two forts of Babylon and Niqius, but in spite of this, the battle against it was one of the hardest that the Muslims had. This was due to the reinforcements that reached the Byzantines from Constantinople, which were led by Theodore himself.

Then, `Amr led the Muslims in the Prayer of Fear. Fortunately, the Muslims were victorious,

and `Amr seized the city and fort and expelled the Byzantines from Kariun after a great number of Muslims and Byzantines were killed.

The Way to Alexandria

After they had seized Kariun, the way to Alexandria became easy, so `Amr ordered his troops to have some rest to relieve the toil that they had suffered from in the Battle of Kariun.

Later, they resumed the march to Alexandria, advancing from the southeast. The city had fifty thousand soldiers and its walls were fortified. The Byzantines also had a large fleet of ships, but the Muslims had not a single one. In addition, they lacked the powerful weapons needed to wreck the fortified wall of Alexandria. The Egyptian Copts helped the Muslims to get aid, but they did not join them in fighting the Byzantines.

The fighting broke out between the Muslims and the Byzantines and the Muslims stormed into

the fort of Alexandria. Thus the severe fighting moved into the fort itself. However, the Byzantines struggled with all their might till they forced the Muslims out of the fort.

`Amr Captured by the Byzantines

No Muslims remained inside the fort except four men who became separated in the fort and were locked inside. One of them was `Amr ibn Al-`As and another was Muslimah ibn Mukhlid. The Byzantines hemmed them in and prevented them from following the rest, but they were ignorant of their names or rank among the Muslims.

When `Amr - who was known for his cunning - and his companions realized this, they sought refuge in a vault in the baths of the fort. They entered it and locked themselves in. One of the Byzantines was ordered to speak to them in Arabic, so he said, "You have become our captives in our hands, so surrender and do not imperil your lives." When `Amr and his group

refused, the Byzantine said, "Your colleagues have captured some of us, so we will make an agreement with you to let you go in exchange for our men and we will not kill you."

`Amr refused this demand as well and with such stubbornness that the Byzantine said, "Do you accept a decisive solution?"

They asked, "What is it?"

"A duel between one of our men and one of yours. If our man defeats yours, you will be our captives and will deliver yourselves. If your man defeats ours, we will give you your freedom and let you go to your colleagues."

The two parties accepted this and made an agreement.

The next day, a Byzantine man who was known to be tough and strong advanced saying, "Let one of you confront our man."

`Amr wanted to go, but Muslimah ibn Mukhlid refused saying, "You're the general and the army's basis is bound to you, and their hearts cling to you and are assured by your safety. If you're slain, it'll be a disaster for all of us. Stay where you are and I'll take your place, Allah willing."

`Amr said, "Go ahead, for perhaps Allah will grant you victory."

Muslimah fought fiercely with the Byzantine for an hour, then Allah granted him victory and the Byzantine was killed. `Amr and his group exclaimed, "Allahu Akbar!"

The Byzantines fulfilled their promise and opened the gates for them, still ignorant of their identities. If they had known that among their captives was `Amr, the commander of the opposing army, they would certainly have acted differently. Later, when they were told of that fact, they regretted after it was too late and blamed

themselves for their reaction. Thus, Alexandria was opened by the hands of `Amr ibn Al-`As.

Mu`awiyah, the Bearer of Good News

`Amr ibn Al-`As, the one who liberated Egypt from the Byzantines, sent Mu`awiyah ibn Khadij to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab with the good news of the great triumph and blessed opening.

Mu`awiyah said to `Amr, "Abu `Abdullah, won't you send a written message with me?"

`Amr answered, "What is the importance of a letter? Aren't you, an Arab man, able to deliver the message, especially that you were present and witnessed events?"

Mu`awiyah ibn Khadij reached Madinah at noon. He dismounted his camel by the door of the mosque. While he was sitting, a maid came out of the house of the Commander of the Faithful, `Umar, and saw him pale and weary after a long journey.

She approached and asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Mu`awiyah ibn Khadij, the messenger of `Amr ibn Al-`As to `Umar, the Commander of the Faithful."

She left him, then came back walking hurriedly so that he heard the rustle of her dress on her legs. She approached him and said, "Stand up and answer the Commander of the Faithful, for he has called for you."

Mu`awiyah followed her. When he entered, he found `Umar putting on his garment with one hand and fastening his clothes with the other. He asked Mu`awiyah, "What's the news?"

He replied, "Commander of the Faithful, Allah has granted us the opening of Alexandria."

`Umar went with Mu`awiyah to the mosque and said to the muezzin, "Call the people to gather to prayers."

The Muslims gathered, then `Umar said to Mu`awiyah, "Stand and inform your fellows." Mu`awiyah stood and informed them about the opening of Alexandria.

`Umar then performed the prayers, went into his house, directed himself towards the Qiblah, prayed to Allah and supplicated to Him. He then sat down and asked the maid if there was any food. She brought some bread and oil.

`Umar said, "Eat."

Mu`awiyah ate small quantities because he was shy and embarrassed. `Umar said, "The traveler likes food. If I could eat, I would have eaten with you."

Mu`awiyah ate, still embarrassed. Then `Umar called for his maid and asked if there were any dates. She brought a plate of dates, and `Umar told Mu`awiyah to eat. Again he did so shyly.

`Umar asked him, "What did you say, Mu`awiyah, when you came to the mosque?"

"I thought that the Commander of the Faithful was taking a nap."

"What a bad guess and saying. If I slept during the day I would harm my subjects and if I slept during the night I would harm myself. How can I sleep then, Mu`awiyah, for these two reasons?"

`Amr Thinks of Taking Alexandria as His Capital

`Amr wanted to have Alexandria as the seat of government, but `Umar did not consent to this and wrote to him, "Do not let the Muslims be in a place that separates them from me by a sea or a river."

`Amr asked his companions, "Where shall we reside?"

They replied, "Let us return to Fustat."

So they returned to Fustat (within present-day Cairo). He then wrote to `Umar, "I have opened a city, which I cannot describe except by saying that I captured four thousand baths and forty thousand Jews who pay *jizyah*."

Opening Dumiyat

`Amr ibn Al-`As sent the Companion Al-Miqdad ibn Al-Aswad in a company to fight Al-Hamuk, one of the uncles of Al-Muqauqis, who had mobilized troops in Dumiyat to fight the Muslims.

The two armies clashed and the son of Al-Hamuk was killed.

Al-Hamuk asked for the advice of his council. One of them suggested making an agreement with the Muslims. Al-Hamuk was angry with him, rejected his advice and killed him, it was said. Al-Hamuk had an impious and

disloyal son called Shata who lived in a house near the walls of the city. He went out at night and directed the Muslims to the weak spots of the city, and thus the Muslims seized it.

Al-Hamuk was ready to fight, but he did not realize the situation until the Muslims were on the walls crying, "Allahu Akbar!" When his son Shata saw the Muslims on the walls of Dumiyat, he and some of his fellows joined them. Realizing the betrayal of his own son, Al-Hamuk was shocked and too feeble to confront him, so he asked for reconciliation from Miqdad, and the Muslims seized Dumiyat. Miqdad was left in charge of it and sent the good news to `Amr.

Shata, after embracing Islam, went to Burulis, Dumirah and Ashmun, where he mustered the people and brought them as reinforcements to the Muslims. He marched with them to open Tunis and fought hard till he was killed as a martyr. His body was carried to and buried outside Dumiyat.

THE OPENING OF PERSIA



THE OPENING OF PERSIA

The Reasons behind the Opening

Al-`Ala' ibn Hadrami was a Companion of the Prophet whom the Prophet ﷺ appointed to govern Bahrain. When the Prophet ﷺ died, Al-`Ala' was still the governor of Bahrain, and the first caliph, Abu Bakr, approved of this, as did `Umar after him. Al-`Ala' was known for his military strategies in the battles against the apostates.

This Companion then wanted to compete with Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas and accomplish a distinguished deed, especially after Sa`d's great victories in Al-Qadisiyah. So he talked to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab about opening some parts of Persia through Bahrain. `Umar objected to the idea because he was worried and anxious about the Muslims. However, Al-`Ala' disobeyed his caliph, underestimating the consequences thereof. He called on the people of Bahrain, urging them to

fight Persia. They hastened to him and presented themselves. He divided them into groups, then sent them by ship to Persia without the permission of his commander. `Umar did not give permission to anyone to raid by sea. Yet, these troops crossed the sea to Persia and went to Istukhur, a city that held the treasures of the Persian kings before Islam. It lay on a rocky hill near the Bandamir River. There, the Persians confronted them and blocked them from reaching their ships. Realizing this, the Muslims fought desperately and defeated them, yet their ships were sunk. They headed to Basra but had no means of returning by sea, and this was what `Umar had feared. Later, the Muslims found Shahrak before them. He took them unawares and blocked their way, so they camped in their places and refrained from fighting.

When this bad news reached `Umar and he knew of Al-`Ala''s rash act that jeopardized his army, he was furious and discharged him and

threatened to punish him. He ordered Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas to be his commander and ordered Al-`Ala' to follow Sa`d.

`Umar wrote to `Utbah ibn Ghazwan, the governor of Basra, to send some troops to save the army that Al-`Ala' had wrongly sent to Persia. `Utbah at once mobilized twelve thousand soldiers under the command of Abu Sabrah ibn Abi Rahm. He marched with his army till he reached Shahrak, who was surrounding the army of Bahrain. They fought and defeated him thoroughly, thus saving their Muslim brothers. Then they returned to Basra and the people of Bahrain returned home through Basra.

The Defeat of Al-Hurmuzan

After the triumph of the Muslims in the Battle of Al-Qadisiyah, Al-Hurmuzan was forced to go to Khuristan, which he seized after killing its citizens. Afterwards, he raided on the people of Misan and Distmisan. Misan was an area famous

for its abundant villages and palm trees that lay between Basra and Waset, while Distmisan was a place between Waset, Basra and Ahwaz. Al-Hurmuzan raided on these two places via two routes: through Munadhir - near Bukharistan - and the Tairi River.

`Utbah ibn Ghazwan, the governor of Basra, sent to Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas asking for reinforcements. The latter sent Na`im ibn Muqrin and Na`im ibn Mas`ud. He ordered them to come from above Misan and Distmisan till they reached a position between the two cities and the Tairi River, i.e., from the direction of Ahwaz.

`Utbah directed Sulma ibn Al-Qain and Harmalah ibn Muritah - both of whom were Muhajirun - to camp on the borders of the land of Misan and Distmisan midway between them and Munadhir. They invited their cousins Ghalib Al-Wa'ili and Kulaib ibn Wa'il Al-Kulaibi, who came out to them.

Sulma and Harmalah said to them, "You are our kin. On such-and-such day, fight against Al-Hurmuzan, for one of us will fight at Munadhir and the other by the Tairi River. We will kill the assaulting troops, then afterwards we will come to you, and nothing, Allah willing, will keep us from Al-Hurmuzan."

The two men returned and responded to the sons of their uncle Ibn Malik, as did their people. They were residing in Khuristan, one of the provinces of Persia, to the west of which lay Baghdad. It had vast fields and meadows in which were bred large numbers of cattle before Islam. Its people knew and trusted them.

On the night planned, Al-Hurmuzan was camping between Delth and the Tairi River. Sulma ibn Al-Qain was leading the people of Basra and Na`im ibn `Amr ibn Muqrin was leading the people of Kufa.

The two parties fought, then the Muslims were reinforced by Ghalib and Kulaib.

Al-Hurmuzan was informed that Munadhir and the Tairi River were now under the control of the Muslims. He was thus terrified and weakened, together with his army. Consequently, they were defeated and fled.

The Muslims pursued them and the other vanquished Persians till they reached a river called the Dujail. There were two Dujail Rivers. One ended above Baghdad between Tikrit and faced Al-Qadisiyah. The other was a river in Ahwaz winding through the land of Asbahan to the Persian Sea. They seized the surrounding land and camped opposite to the market of Ahwaz, while Al-Hurmuzan crossed the river that separated the two armies.

Seeing the power and firmness of the Muslims and their pursuit of the fleeing Persians, Al-Hurmuzan requested to reconcile with them.

`Utbah ibn Ghazwan agreed with him: "To Al-Hurmuzan, the joy of the soul, will be the banks surrounding the Tairi River and Munadhir and what he succeeded to seize of the market of Ahwaz, and it will not be taken from him." Then `Utbah stationed Sulma ibn Al-Qain in Munadhir and Ghalib Al-Wa'il was the ruler. Harmalah ibn Muritah was stationed at the Tairi River and Kulaib ibn Wa'il Al-Kulaibi was the ruler.

Yazdigird Fights the Muslims Again

After Al-Qadisiyah, Yazdigird fled to Merv, where he stayed urging the Persians to fight against the Muslims. They were moved and their zeal was ignited to fight. They exchanged messages with the people of Ahwaz, pledging to protect, defend and help. News of these arrangements reached Harqus ibn Zuhair, Sulma ibn Al-Qain and Harmalah ibn Muritah, so they wrote to the Commander of the Faithful asking for advice.

`Umar wrote to Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas ordering him to send a large army under the command of Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin to Ahwaz. He advised him to be swift and to beware Al-Hurmuzan.

He also wrote to `Abdullah ibn Qais known as Abu Musa Al- Ash`ari, the governor of Basra, to send a huge army to Ahwaz led by Sahl ibn `Adi, the brother of Suhail ibn `Adi. And with him he was to send Al-Bara' ibn Malik - brother of Anas ibn Malik, the servant of the Prophet - as well as Majza'ah ibn Thaur, Arjafah ibn Hurthumah and others.

The people of Basra and Kufa were led by Abu Sabrah ibn Abi Rahm, who was a Companion of the Quraish. He had embraced Islam a long time before and had witnessed the battles of Badr, Uhud, Al-Khandaq, and other events with the Prophet ﷺ, who had made him the brother in faith of Salmah ibn Waqsh.

Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin advanced with the people of Kufa to Ahwaz on mules, for they avoided horses. He left Harqus ibn Zuhair, Sulma ibn Al-Qain and Harmalah ibn Muritah behind and marched towards Al-Hurmuzan, who was in Ramhurmuz. He encountered Al-Hurmuzan's army in Abek - a place in the region of Ahwaz with villages and fields. They fought and Al-Hurmuzan was defeated and fled to Tustur.

Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin proceeded to Ramhurmuz, where he camped.

Afterwards, the army of Basra and Kufa, along with the other generals, assembled and besieged Al-Hurmuzan in Tustur in trenches. All the armies were led by Abu Sabrah ibn Abi Rahm. They besieged the Persians for more than a month and assaulted them. They attacked eighty times and it was a tough battle between the two.

Finally, the Muslims broke through the trenches of the Persians and entered their cities

after a hard struggle. Al-Hurmuzan sought refuge in the castle, but when he realized that the Muslims had blockaded all the ways, he called to his fellows and soldiers, "I give you my hand to yield to the sovereignty of `Umar to do whatever he likes to me." The Muslims captured and chained him and seized Tustur. They then sent the vanguards of the army to fight the Persians who were in the cities surrounding Tustur. In this battle, Al-Hurmuzan killed Majza'ah ibn Thaur and Al-Bara' ibn Malik and many other Muslims. `Abdullah ibn Qais returned to Basra at the order of `Umar.

Al-Hurmuzan Captive in the City of Allah's Messenger

Abu Sabrah ibn Abi Rahm sent Al-Hurmuzan with a detachment of his troops to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. When they reached Madinah, they dressed Al-Hurmuzan in his silk garments with gold ornaments and his ruby-inlaid crown so that `Umar could see him in this form. They did not

find `Umar in his house but inquired and learned he was in the mosque.

When the group entered the mosque with Al-Hurmuzan, they found `Umar in a nook lying asleep on his burnoose with his stick in his hand. On seeing this, Al-Hurmuzan wondered aloud, "Where is `Umar?"

The Muslims pointed at him and said, "Here he is."

Al-Hurmuzan was astonished. "Where are his guards and chamberlains?" Still unable to believe, he added, "He must be a prophet."

They said, "No, but he lives like the prophets."

Disturbed by the noise of the speakers, `Umar sat up, looked at Al-Hurmuzan and asked, "Is this Al-Hurmuzan?"

"Yes, Commander of the Faithful."

`Umar gazed at him and at his attire and said, "I pray to Allah to forbid us from Hell and I seek His aid. Thanks be to Allah, Who by Islam has humiliated this person and the likes of him."

`Umar looked round him and said, "O Muslims! Adhere to this religion and follow the guidance of your Prophet ﷺ and do not be tempted by life with its allurements, for it is deceiving."

`Umar then ordered them to take off all the ornaments and the rich attire that Al-Hurmuzan was wearing and to dress him in ordinary clothes.

Afterwards, he asked him "Why did you violate the treaty several times?"

Al-Hurmuzan replied, "I'm afraid you'll kill me before I tell you."

`Umar assured him, "Nothing will be done to you till you tell me."

Al-Hurmuzan asked for some water and it was brought to him. He seized the cup with shaking hands and said, "I'm afraid to be killed while I'm drinking."

`Umar told him, "Nothing will be done to you till you drink it."

Al-Hurmuzan spilled the water on the ground without drinking.

`Umar said, "Bring him another and don't let him suffer from killing and thirst."

Al-Hurmuzan said, "I didn't need any water, I just wanted to feel secured by it."

"I'll kill you."

"But you secured me."

"You're a liar."

Anas ibn Malik said, "Excuse me, Commander of the Faithful, he's right. You secured him."

`Umar said angrily, "What are you saying, Anas? I secured the killer of Majza'ah ibn Thaur and Al-Bara' ibn Malik? I swear by Allah that if you don't find a way out for yourself, I'll punish you."

Anas said, "You told him, 'Nothing will be done to you till you tell me' and 'Nothing will be done to you till you drink it.'"

The Muslims around `Umar said, "Yes, you did."

`Umar went to Al-Hurmuzan and said, "You deceived me. By Allah, I am not to be deceived by any except a Muslim."

Al-Hurmuzan declared his faith, saying, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

Consequently, when Al-Hurmuzan declared his belief in Islam, `Umar ordered some money of about two thousand dirhams for him and made him reside in Madinah.

Opening Sus

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab received several messages stating that the Persians were gathering in Nahawand. Thus, he gave the permission for the Muslim armies to advance in Persia.

Abu Sabrah camped in Sus, a town in Khuzastan, and Al-Muqtarib ibn Rabi`ah took his place in governing Basra.

Al-Muqtarib ibn Rabi`ah's real name was Al-Aswad ibn Rabi`ah, but he once came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who asked him, "What brought you near?" He replied, "I approach to be your companion." This was why he abandoned his name "Al-Aswad" and called himself "Al-Muqtarib", which means "The Approacher".

Yazdigird had gathered the Persians in Nahawand, which was a great city.

Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin, along with his troops from Kufa and Sabrah, besieged the people of Sus while Razin ibn `Abdullah ibn Kulaib Al-Faqimi besieged the people of Yasapur, a city in Khuzastan built by Sapurin Ardashir and thus named after him.

Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin received a message from `Umar ordering him to proceed to Nahawand, so he skirmished with Sus before his departure. Munaf ibn Saiyed, who led Al-Nu`man's cavalry, opened the gates of Sus by force, broke their chains and locks, and allowed the Muslims to storm into the city. The citizens asked for reconciliation and were granted it.

The Battle of Nahawand

Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin marched towards Nahawand, while Al- Muqtarib ibn Rabi`ah

advanced till he camped near Yasapur with Razin ibn `Abdullah ibn Kulaib. After besieging the town for some time, the Muslims were surprised at the sudden opening of the gates of the city and at the sight of the citizens forsaking the houses and hiding places and leaving the markets open. Astonished, the Muslims sent delegates to inquire, "What forced you to do this?"

The citizens replied, "You offered us a treaty of peace and we accepted it and agreed to pay *jizyah*. And in return you will grant us safety and not fight us."

The astonished Muslims said, "We didn't do this."

"We do not lie," replied the army of Yasapur.

The Muslims investigated the issue and learned that one of the slaves called Maknaf, who originally belonged to the army of Yasapur, was the one who offered them peace.

The Muslims said to them, "The one who wrote to you is a slave."

The citizens replied, "We don't know who is the slave and who is the master. He came to us with the offer and we accepted it and we did not betray. If you like, violate the agreement."

The Muslims did not fight and wrote to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab about what had happened. `Umar ordered them to respect the treaty, so they left Yasapur.

Meanwhile, when `Umar ordererd Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin to encounter the Persians in Nahawand, he also ordered, "If Al-Nu`man is killed, Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman is to command. If he is killed, Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajli is to command."

Al-Nu`man advanced accompanied by Hudhaifah, Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah Al-Thaqafi,

Al-Ash`ath ibn Qais, Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al- Bajli and `Abdullah ibn `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

On reaching Nahawand, Al-Nu`man said, "O Muslims! I saw that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not initiate the battle at the beginning of the day, he delayed the fight till afternoon. Allah, grant Al-Nu`man martyrdom by the victory of the Muslims and help them to conquer."

The people said, "Amen."

Al-Nu`man then added, "I will shake the standard three times. On the third shake, attack, and if I am killed, none of you pay any heed."

When Al-Nu`man shook the standard for the third time, they attacked.

The battle

The Arabs and Persians fought on Wednesday and Thursday with the victory fluctuating between them. On Friday, the Persians

hid in their trenches and were surrounded by the Muslims. They intended not to come out unless they wished to. However, Al-Nu`man feared that this situation would last a long time.

He met with his council and said, "As you see, the disbelievers are hiding in their trenches and refuges. They don't come out unless they want to, and we're unable to force them out. You perceive that the Muslims are annoyed by this, so what action do you suggest to make them fight?"

The eldest, `Amr ibn Thani said, "Besieging them is tougher than fighting them. Leave them in their trenches and attack those who come to you."

Al-Nu`man objected to his opinion.

`Amr ibn Ma`di Karib said, "Resist them, contend stubbornly and do not reduce armaments."

Yet this viewpoint was rejected by them all, "He asks us to fight some walls that are also against us."

Tulaihah ibn Khuwailid Al-Asadi said, "I suggest sending some cavalrymen to entangle them in a fight, and whenever they mingle with them they return to us one after the other. We'll continue in this process so long as we fight them. If they see this, they'll be lured out and we'll be able to fight them till Allah destines us and them to what He likes."

Tulaihah's suggestion pleased Al-Nu`man, so he ordered Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr, who was responsible for the rear, to combat them. The Persians came out of their trenches as if they were iron mountains, for they had chained themselves together in groups of seven so that they could not run away. They spilled iron spikes on the ground behind them to prevent them from fleeing in defeat.

When they left their trenches, Al-Qa`qa` and his band retreated as if they were defeated. Thus, the Persians took advantage of such action and ran after him. On seeing the Persians chasing Al-Qa`qa`, Tulaihah was excited and said, "Here they come! Here they come!"

As soon as the Persians were away from their forts, trenches and positions and Al-Nu`man saw that the distance separating them from their center was enough to initiate a struggle, he ordered the Muslims to stay on the alert but not to fight till he ordered them.

They obeyed and took shelter behind the shields and armors to protect themselves from the arrows. The Persians shot the Muslims with arrows till they were badly injured, and some Muslims complained to Al-Nu`man, "Can't you see what we're facing? What are you waiting for? Order your army to fight them."

Al-Nu`man said, "Don't be rash! Don't be rash!" He intended to wait till the Persians were lured gradually. However, on the second day he did not issue an order to attack. He waited for the Prophet's favorite time of day to combat the enemies, which was the afternoon.

Al-Nu`man mounted on his horse and walked around, stood by each standard of the Muslims motivating, encouraging and giving them hope. Then he said, "I will call 'Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!' three times. When I cry for the third time, I will attack, so attack with me. If I am killed, let Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman command. If he is killed, too, let it be Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajli." He then named seven generals to succeed him, ending with Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah Al-Thaqafi. He then prayed, "O Allah, grant power and dignity to Your religion and victory to Your servants. O Allah, let Al-Nu`man be the first martyr today who dignifies Your religion and struggles to gain victory for Your servants. O

Allah, I beg You to make me happy by a triumph today that grants honor to Islam, and take my soul as a martyr."

On hearing this, the Muslims were moved to tears.

Al-Nu`man then returned to his former position and cried, "Allahu Akbar!" three times and the two armies fought intensely. None had ever heard of a battle fiercer than that of Nahawand, for no sound was heard except that of the ringing of iron.

The Muslims persevered and fought desperately. In the period of time between the afternoon and darkness, large numbers of Persians were killed so that the battlefield was covered with bodies and soaked in blood that caused the people and animals to slip.

Allah, the All-Hearing and All-Knowing, answered the plea of Al- Nu`man ibn `Amr ibn

Muqrin, whose horse slipped with him on it. One of the Persians shot an arrow into his waist. His soul, thus, went to Paradise and he gained martyrdom on a Friday.

The Companion Hudaifah ibn Al-Yaman took the standard of command and attacked the Persians boldly, forcing them to flee to the mountains surrounding Hamadhan. The Persian leader, Al-Fairuzan, was among the fugitives. The Muslims chased them and killed a majority of them, including Al-Fairuzan, and they took many spoils and seized Hamadhan.

The chiefs of the city came to Hudaifah ibn Al-Yaman and asked for reconciliation on behalf of Hamadhan. It was the second biggest city in Persia and had a very large number of Jews living in it, more than in any other place.

The Muslims called the opening of Nahawand the greatest victory, for no war took

place after it, and the Persians after their defeat were unable to restore their power.

When the news reached `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and he learned about the victory and the death of Al-Nu`man ibn Muqrin, he wept and his heart broke. He went to the people and announced his death from the pulpit, put his hand on his head and cried.

In the battle of Nahawand, the Muslim army consisted of thirty thousand warriors, while the Persians were fifty thousand fighters under the command of Al-Fairuzan. Thirty thousand Persians were killed in the battlefield, whereas Al-Fairuzan fled to Hamadhan, where he was later killed.

`Umar Orders the Muslims to Spread in Persia

After the battle of Nahawand, the Commander of the Faithful ordered the Muslims

to increase and spread in Persia, as the Companion Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais had suggested. `Umar assigned the military leaders to open the cities and sent the standards to the commanders as follows:

Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais was directed to Khurasan.

Mujash`i ibn Mas`ud Al-Salmi was directed to Azdashir Kharah and Sapur. (Azdashir Kharah means "the beauty of Azdashir" and the city of Shiraz lay there.)

`Uthman ibn Abi Al-`As Al-Thaqafi was directed to Istukhur.

Sariyah ibn Zanim Al-Kitani was directed to Fasa and Darabagrid. Fasa was a Persian city that was four days' travel from Shiraz.

Suhail ibn `Adi was directed to Karman, a city between Persia, Makran Sajistan, and Khurasan.

`Assim ibn `Amr was directed to Sajistan, a vast province south of Hirah, thirteen leagues from Karman.

Al-Hakam ibn `Umair Al-Taghlabi was directed to Mukran, a province with Karman to its west, Sajistan to its north, and the sea to its south, and the majority of it was desert.

`Umar reinforced them with people of Kufa. He reinforced Suhail ibn `Adi with `Abdullah ibn `Utban; Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais with `Ulqumah ibn Al-Nadir, `Abdullah ibn Abi `Ukail and Rab`i ibn `Amir; `Assim ibn `Amr with `Abdullah ibn `Umair Al-Ashja`i; and Al-Hakam ibn `Umair with Shihab ibn Al-Mukhariq and others.

The Spoils in Nahawand

After the defeat of the Persians, the Muslims entered the city of Nahawand and took what they found in it and waited for the other booty coming

from Hamadhan with their fellows, Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr and Na`im ibn Muqrin.

Al-Hurbudh, the master of the House of Fire, came to the Muslims and asked for a treaty of peace. He said to Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman, "Will you grant me safety together with others that I like, and in return I will get you some treasures of Khusraw that I possess and keep for the misfortunes of life?" Hudhaifah accepted. Al-Hurbudh then brought precious jewels in two jewelry boxes.

Hudhaifah sent the treasure together with one fifth of the spoils with Al-Sa'ib ibn Al-Aqra` Al-Thaqafi to the Commander of the Faithful.

The next day `Umar said to Sa'ib, "Take the jewelry boxes and go away and sell them."

Sa'ib asked, "Why, Commander of the Faithful?"

`Umar replied, "Woe to you! The night you arrived with them, I dreamed that the angels were dragging me to the boxes, which were burning. They said to me, 'We will burn you with them.' I said to them, 'I will divide them among the Muslims.' Take them away from me and sell them so that they can be among the portion and allotment of the Muslims."

Each cavalryman gained six thousand dirhams, while the infantryman's portion was two thousand dirhams. Hudhaifah gave the fifth of the spoils to the people.

THE OPENING
OF IRAQ 2

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In the beginning of the year 13 A.H., Al-Muthanna ibn Harithah Al-Shaibani came from Hirah to the first caliph in Madinah to ask him to send an expedition to fight the Persians in Iraq. However, Abu Bakr was seriously ill and on his deathbed, so he ordered `Umar to carry this out later.

Subsequently, the first thing `Umar did after being chosen caliph was to urge the people before the Fajr Prayer to go to Persia with Al-Muthanna, as was Abu Bakr's will. However, no one responded, for they feared this destination and were reluctant to face them because of their sovereignty, power and oppression of other people.

On the second day, `Umar repeated the call, but again no one replied. Al-Muthanna ibn Harithah had to talk to the people. He said, "O people, do not fear this destination of Persia, for

we have spread in the Persian countryside and won victory over them in the majority of Iraq, and the Muslims have conquered the Persians on the western side of the Euphrates River. We took half of their land, defeated them, and other people have encroached boldly on them and, Allah willing, we shall resume."

On the fourth day of his caliphate, `Umar called the people for the fourth time. Abu `Ubaid ibn Mas`ud Al-Thaqafi said, "I will go." He was followed by Sa`d ibn `Ubaid and Sulait ibn Qais. Then people joined them one after the other. `Umar dispatched a thousand men from Madinah and its surroundings under the command of Abu `Ubaid ibn Mas`ud, who took the standard. This was the first army mobilized by `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

The Battle of Namariq

Al-Muthanna ibn Harith Al-Shaibani returned to Hirah after an absence of one month.

During this time, the Persians were distracted from the Muslims by some internal conflicts. One of their princes seized the throne by force, then the princess Boran threw him off by a series of bloodshed, revolts and struggles. Boran then called for Rustom, the famous Persian general, who was in Khurasan, to come to her as soon as possible.

Rustom came to her with an army and reached Mada'in. He defeated every troop of his Persian opponents in their struggle in Mada'in. He defeated Sayawekhsh, Husr and Husr Azermidekht, then he conquered Mada'in, killed Sayawekhsh and crowned Boran. She then ordered him to lead the Persians, complaining to him about their disagreement, disunity and conflicts.

Rustom said, "I am at your service, obedient and submissive, and I do not ask for any compensation or reward."

When Al-Muthanna arrived at Hirah, Abu `Ubaid ibn Mas`ud Al- Thaqafi caught up with him after a month. Al-Muthanna stayed in Hirah for fifteen nights. Rustom sent an army to encounter Al-Muthanna in Hirah. When the news reached him, Al-Muthanna advanced with a company till he camped in Khafan, a place on the western Euphrates, so that he would not be attacked from behind. He stayed there till the army of Abu `Ubaid ibn Mas`ud Al-Thaqafi joined him.

He then arranged the army, putting Waliq ibn Jidarah over the cavalry and right flank, and `Amr ibn Haitham ibn Al-Salit over the left flank.

Rustom assigned Jaban to lead the Persian army and he put over the two flanks Jashans Mah and Mardanashah. The Muslims fiercely attacked Jaban in Namariq. The Persians were beaten by Allah's will and Jaban was captured, but he freed himself by a trick and then had no choice but to run away.

As for Abu `Ubaid ibn Mas`ud Al-Thaqafi, he crossed the Euphrates and took the second Persian general, Narsi, by surprise. He seized his camp and spoiled great quantities of superb dates called Narsyan, which was a special food reserved for the king, the generals of his army and his attendants. The neighboring tribes came and offered *jizyah* willingly as proof of their loyalty to Abu `Ubaid. They also invited him to a glorious banquet, but he refused to go without his army, so the troops all attended with him.

The Battle of the Bridge

Rustom was furious at the defeat of the two armies led by Jaban and Narsi at the hands of Abu `Ubaid's army. He asked his fellows, "Which Persian do you think is the fiercest on the Arabs?"

They said, "Bahman Jadhweh." He was known as Dhul Hajib, "The One with the Eyebrows" because he used to bind his eyebrows with a bandage as sign of pride and arrogance.

Rustom, at once, ordered him to fight and supplied him with powerful elephants. Bahman Jadhweh marched with his army raising the standard of Khusraw. It was made of tiger skin and was twelve ells tall and eight ells wide. Bahman camped in Qiss Al-Natif, which was near Kufa on the eastern side of the Euphrates. Abu `Ubaid, meanwhile, camped on the western side in a place called Mirwahah opposing the Persian army.

Bahman sent to Abu `Ubaid saying, "Choose whether to cross to us and we will allow you to do so, or let us cross to you."

Some of the Muslim generals said to Abu `Ubaid, "Don't cross to him, Abu `Ubaid. We forbid you from crossing."

He replied, "They're not more daring to face death than we are." He crossed with his army on a bridge of boats tied together. The two armies confronted each other in a serious battle.

When the Muslims' horses caught the strange sight of elephants, they were afraid and reluctant to proceed. Therefore, the Persians assaulted the Muslims and distracted their horses, making them terrified and confused. They also shot arrows at them.

The Muslims were suffering so that Abu `Ubaid dismounted his terrified horse, and so did all his troops. They advanced towards the Persians on foot and there was a fierce battle. Abu `Ubaid cried to his army, "People! Attack the elephants! Cut their belts and throw off their loads of people and things."

Abu `Ubaid himself attacked the white elephant and cut its belts so that the people on its back fell down. The Muslims did as their leader did. They did not spare an elephant without attacking its load and killing the men on its back. The elephant knelt down to Abu `Ubaid, so he struck it with his sword aiming to cut its trunk. Yet, the elephant was quicker and attacked Abu

`Ubaid with its trunk or leg. Abu `Ubaid fell to the ground and the animal crushed him.

On seeing Abu `Ubaid under the elephant, the Muslims raged with anger. They rushed to save him from the savage beast, but during their trial seven men of Thaqif were killed. Before their death they handed the standard one to the other among them until finally Al-Muthanna ibn Harithah took it, but the people ran away from him.

When `Abdullah ibn Mirthad Al-Thaqafi realized what had happened to Abu `Ubaid and what the people were running from, he hurried to the bridge that the Muslims had crossed to face the army of Bahman. He cut the bridge and said, "O people! Die hard as your leaders did or win victory!"

The Persians then forced the Muslims to the bridge. The Muslims jumped into the Euphrates, and those who did not endure were drowned,

while some of them reached the other side. Al-Muthanna and some cavalrymen urged the Muslims saying, "I am behind you, so cross slowly and carefully and do not be confused and drown yourselves."

`Urwah ibn Zaid Al-Khair fought hard, and so did Abu Mahjan Al- Thaqafi and Abu Zaid Al-Ta'i. This last fought for the sake of the Arab race, for he was a Christian who had gone to Hirah on business.

Al-Muthanna ibn Harithah called out, "Cross and save yourselves!" He reconnected the bridge and they crossed.

The last one killed at the bridge was Sulait ibn Qais, and Al- Muthanna was injured. However, he crossed the bridge and protected its western end. Dhul Hajib wanted to get them, but he was unable. The people of Madinah who were with the army returned to Madinah, while others

resided in the deserts. Al-Muthanna stayed behind with some of his army.

When `Umar learned about the defeat of the Muslims and that some Muslims were wandering around feeling guilty and ashamed of their defeat, he was sorrowful and said, "O Allah! Every Muslim is not to be blamed by me. I am a party to every Muslim. Be merciful to Abu `Ubaid, for if he had retreated to me, I would have been his party."

The first to reach Madinah with the unhappy news of this battle was `Abdullah ibn Al-Hasan Al-Khatami. Mu`adh, the reciter of the Qur'an, was one of those who retreated to Madinah. Whenever he recited the verse meaning ❴And whoever turns away in desertion from them on such a day, unless it be for manoeuvering or removing to join another host, he is laden with the burden of Allah's wrath, and his abode is Hell, and an evil destination it is!❵ (Al-Anfal 8: 16) he cried. `Umar, thus, said to him, "Don't cry,

Mu`adh, for I am your own party and you retreated to me."

The number of Muslims at the Battle of the Bridge was nine thousand. Four thousand were killed, drowned or injured. Two thousand retreated, and three thousand survived with Al-Muthanna; whereas six thousand Persians were killed.

The Internal Conflicts in Persia

After the war ended, Bahman Jadhweh intended to cross the Euphrates River to resume his victories. However, he had some information that a rebellion had broken out in Mada'in, the Persian capital, with the aim of getting rid of Rustom and violating the pact between him and his party. Thus, they split into two parties.

Therefore, the internal conflicts in Persia were the reason behind their inability to pursue the Muslims. Their engagement in their own

affairs gave the Muslims a chance to rest, reunite themselves and restore their energy.

Reasons for the Muslim Defeat in the Battle of the Bridge

The Muslims were defeated in the Battle of the Bridge because they crossed to where the Persians were, although the generals had warned Abu `Ubaid against the serious consequences of crossing. Yet, he thought crossing to them displayed courage and power. Also, it was a fatal mistake on the part of `Abdullah ibn Mirthad Al-Thaqafi to cut the bridge because the Muslims were encircled and perplexed, and many of them were drowned.

The death of the commander, Abu `Ubaid ibn Mas`ud Al-Thaqafi, under the elephant had a bad effect on his army. For undoubtedly the death of the leader frustrates the souls of his army because the soldiers consider it a death for them all, and his defeat is a public dilemma.

The Battle of Buwaib

Buwaib was a river in Iraq. This battle took place in Ramadan 13 A.H.

The Commander of the Faithful received the news of the Muslims' defeat in the Battle of the Bridge calmly, in spite of his grief at their rout. He did not blame them for the retreat but asked them to reinforce Al-Muthanna ibn Harithah in Iraq. Bujailah was in the company, and they were led by Jarir ibn `Abdullah and `Ismah ibn `Abdullah Al-Dabbi and his fellows. They marched to join Al-Muthanna.

`Umar sent all the generals and armies who came from fighting against the apostates to Al-Muthanna as well. Al-Muthanna, on his part, sent to all the surrounding Arab tribes asking for their help. They advanced to assist him in huge numbers, including Anas ibn Hilal Al-Nair, who came with a large number of his Christian tribe,

the Namir, who said, “We will fight with our Arab people.”

Rustom and Al-Fairuzan’s spies told them about the arrangements and reinforcements of Al-Muthanna, so they schemed to send Mahran Al-Hamadhani with some cavalry to Hirah. While Al-Muthanna was in a place between Qadisiyah and Khafan, a place near Kufa, one of his spies brought him the news of the Persian march. The spy also told him that the internal affairs in Mada’in had stabilized and that a huge army was sent to encounter him.

Al-Muthanna camped in the bottom of a valley in Furat Badiqli and then wrote to Jarir ibn `Abdullah Al-Bajli, `Ismah ibn `Abdullah Al-Dabbi, and all the reinforcements telling them to head for Buwaib on the western side of the Euphrates, where they were to meet.

Mahran Al-Hamadhani was camping opposite to Al-Muthanna on the eastern side of the

Euphrates. He sent to Al-Muthanna "Cross to us!" but he refused because `Umar had warned him beforehand against such action. So, Mahran crossed with his army and camped on the river.

Al-Muthanna ordered his troops to break their fast so that they would be able to fight and endure the struggle against their enemies, as the Prophet ﷺ had done in the Battle of Badr. They obeyed the order.

The Persians advanced in three rows, each with an elephant. The infantry were leading and making noise. Al-Muthanna said to the Muslims, "What you hear is nothing, so keep silent."

Al-Muthanna was assuring his army, riding his obstinate horse that he only rode when he intended to fight. He stood by the standard bearers heartening and encouraging them by saying, "I hope that the Muslims will not be attacked through your positions. By Allah, nothing will

please me today except what pleases me for the sake of your rank and file."

They answered in agreement to his words, for they loved him.

He said, "I will cry, 'Allahu Akbar!' three times, so be ready and attack on hearing it for the fourth time."

However, no sooner did he cry, "Allahu Akbar!" than the Persians attacked, confusing their horses. Al-Muthanna noticed some disturbance among the people of the tribe of `Ijl so he sent a message to them, "The commander salutes you and says, 'Don't embarrass the Muslims today.'" They said, "All right," and organized themselves. He was satisfied and smiled.

When the fight was getting more serious and longer, Al-Muthanna said to Anas ibn Hilal Al-Namiri, "You are an Arab though you are not of

our religion. When I attack Mahran Al-Hamadhani, attack with me."

Al-Muthanna attacked Mahran and forced him to leave his position and he got into the right flank of his troops. They mingled together and the two armies were thoroughly engaged in the fight. The dust was raised high and the two parties fought desperately, neither able to end the combat in its favor. Mas'ud, the brother of Al-Muthanna, and his troops were injured. Mas'ud yelled, "O Banu Bakr! Raise your banner! May Allah raise your status and do not be moved by my death." Al-Muthanna said also, "If you see that we are wounded or dead, do not leave what you are doing. Keep your positions and save us the trouble of these who are opposite to you." The centers of the two armies fought vigorously. A Christian youth belonging to the tribe of Taghlib killed Mahran Al- Hamadhani and captured his horse.

Al-Muthanna ibn Harithah fought boldly till he defeated the center of the Persian army. When

the Muslims on both flanks perceived this, they attacked the right and left flanks of the Persian army till they overcame them.

Al-Muthanna preceded them to the bridge and blocked the way of the Persians. The Muslim cavalry attacked and killed them. That day was called the Day of the Tens, for every Muslim killed ten Persians on that day. Nearly a hundred thousand Persians were slain.

Al-Muthanna regretted blocking the bridge and said, "I made a mistake, but Allah saved us from its consequences. It was my preceding the Persians to the bridge till I forced them out. Do not do such a thing again, for it was an error, and one should not expel the one who was unable to refuse." He meant that holding the bridge resulted in losing his men.

Some of the wounded Muslims died, including Mas`ud ibn Harithah Al-Shaibani and Khalid ibn Hilal. Al-Muthanna prayed for them

and said, "What relieves my grief is that they endured and witnessed Buwaib and did not retreat."

The war spoils were great, and there were many types of loot consisting of cereals, flour, cows and sheep.

Al-Muthanna divided the spoils among the soldiers of his army and those sent by `Umar from Madinah as reinforcements.

After that, the Muslim generals `Assim, `Ismah and Jarir wrote to Al-Muthanna, "Allah the Almighty has granted us victory and safety, and nothing prevents us from the Persians, so allow us to advance." He gave them permission. They marched till they reached Sabat. Its people fortified themselves and the Muslims overcame the towns surrounding it. Then they returned to Al-Muthanna.

The Market of Khanafis

[illegible]

"A distance of a few days' travel."

They told him that the market of Khanafis had many people who came to it and people from the tribes of Rabi`ah and Quda`ah assembled to guard them. Al-Muthanna prepared to raid the city. He marched and attacked Khanafis on the market day. It had two groups of cavalry present from Rabi`ah and Quda`ah. Rumans ibn Wabarah led Quda`ah and Al-Salil ibn Qais led Rabi`ah and they were called the Verdant Ones.

Al-Muthanna scattered the market and those in it, plundered the Verdant Ones, then retreated to his former position. On that day, the chiefs of Anbar strengthened themselves against him, but later on they came to him and brought fodder and food. They also brought guides to lead him to Baghdad, so he raided it on the morning of the market day and killed many and took what Allah wanted them to take.

Al-Muthanna said to them, "Don't take anything but gold and silver. Don't take baggage except what one can load unto his animal." The people in the market ran away and the Muslims filled their hands with gold and silver.

Al-Muthanna said to his people, "People! Depart and fulfill your desires, then be ready to leave thanking Allah and asking Him for His grace."

He heard them whispering to each other, "They will pursue us quickly."

Al-Muthanna said, "Whisper good words and don't whisper bad speech among yourselves. Think about things and estimate them, then talk." He then added, "If the guards chase you from eyesight they could not seize you till you reach your camps and people. If they seize you, I would fight them for two reasons: to be rewarded by Allah and to win victory. Trust and think good of Allah, for He has granted you victory several

times, though they were more than you in number."

He then returned with his army to stay on the Silhin River in Anbar. Then he resumed his march till he reached the north of Tikrit. He wrote to `Umar telling him about his raids.

THE OPENING OF KHURASAN

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The Battle of Tuburstan

The battle took place in 30 A.H. Tuburstan was an ancient Iranian province southeast of the Caspian Sea. It was bordered by Kilan (or Jilan) on the west, Iraq on the south, and Khurasan on the east. Among its towns were Istrabadh and Dinbawand (or Dimaqand). Its name meant "the place of axes".

The First Muslim Directed to Open Tuburstan

The first to determine to open Tuburstan was Suwaid ibn Muqrin, who was sent by his brother Na`im ibn Muqrin at the instructions Caliph `Umar. Suwaid marched to Qoms and entered it peacefully, then he entered Jirjan. It was said that he settled a treaty with its ruler, Al-Asbahand, the ruler of Tuburstan.

Then it was invaded by Sa`id ibn Al-`As, except for `Abdullah ibn `Amir, who left Basra to advance to Khurasan, thus preceding Sa`id ibn Al-`As. `Abdullah ibn `Amir camped in Abrashahar, which Sa`id ibn Al-`As left and headed with his army to Qoms and reconciled with its citizens.

Sa`id then reached Tamyah, a coastal city of Tuburstan on the border of Jirjan. Its citizens fought him and he prayed the Fear Prayer while engaged in the battle. Sa`id hit a Persian on his shoulder and the point of the sword came out from beneath his arm. Sa`id besieged them till they asked for a treaty of peace and safety. He agreed to the condition that he would not kill one of them. However, when they opened the fort, he killed them all saving one man and took as spoils everything that was there. Sa`id ibn Al-`As also opened Namyah, which was a desert devoid of any houses or life, before returning to Kufa. When he settled a treaty with them, they sometimes paid

jizyah and other times refused to pay, thus violating their agreement.

Opening Khurasan

In 31 A.H., after Abu Lu'lu'ah Al-Majusi stabbed the Commander of the Faithful and killed him as a martyr, the citizens of Khurasan violated the pact and betrayed the Muslims.

Later, when the Muslims chose `Uthman ibn `Affan to succeed `Umar, he appointed `Abdullah ibn `Amir as governor of Basra. `Abdullah managed to open some Persian towns and cities. He invaded Khurasan and left Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan to succeed him in Basra. He marched towards Karman and ordered Mujashi` ibn Mas`ud Al-Salmi to fight its people who had betrayed the Muslims and violated the agreement.

He also ordered Al-Rabi` ibn Ziyad Al-Harithi to fight against Sajistan, a city one league from Karman that had broken the treaty.

`Abdullah ibn `Amir advanced to Nisapur with Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais in the vanguard of the army. He reached Al-Tabsin, which had two forts and was the gate of Khurasan. The citizens reconciled with him.

Afterwards, he progressed to Kahistan, but its people resisted him, fighting desperately till they sought refuge in their fort.

`Abdullah ibn `Amir sent a company to Rustaq Zam, a small city of Nisapur, which they opened after encountering its people. Allah also granted him the opening of Bakharz and Juwin, two cities of Nisapur, and he took many captives.

After that, `Abdullah directed Al-Aswad ibn Kulthum ibn `Adi to Baihaq, a city after Nisapur. He and some of his army entered from an opening in its walls, but the enemies blocked the way and fought fiercely. Al-Aswad and some of his men were killed. After his death, his brother Adham resumed the struggle till he overcame them after a

weary battle. Adham ibn Kulthum buried all the martyrs except his brother Al-Aswad, who used to pray Allah to resurrect him from the stomachs of birds and wild animals. So he did not bury the body.

Allah granted victory to `Abdullah ibn `Amir over small cities of Nisapur like Bisht, Ashbandh, Rakh, Zarah, Khuwaf, Asfara'in and Ar`iyan.

Then he came to Abrashahr, the capital of Nisapur, and besieged it for many months. The city was divided into four zones, each with a man in charge. One of the men in charge of a zone came to `Abdullah ibn `Amir asking for a treaty of peace and security in return for allowing the Muslims into the city.

`Abdullah accepted the deal, and the man helped the Muslims to enter the city by night and opened the gates for them. The satrap of the city took shelter in its fortified castle together with others. He then asked for a peace treaty on behalf

of all Nisapur and agreed to pay the annual *jizyah*. When `Abdullah accomplished the opening Nisapur, he assigned Qais ibn Al-Haitham Al-Salmi to rule it.

Then `Abdullah directed `Abdullah ibn Khazim Al-Salmi to the village of Hamrandar of Nasa. He opened it, and the governor of Nasa came to him offering to reconcile on the harvest of the land, and in return no citizens were to be killed or captured. Bahmana, the supreme ruler of Abyurd, reconciled with `Abdullah ibn `Amir on a payment of four thousand dirhams.

Also, `Abdullah ordered `Abdullah ibn Khazim to advance to Sarkhas, a city between Nisapur and Merv. He attacked them till the satrap of the city, Zadhwih, came to him asking for a pact to grant safety to a hundred men and in return he would give them their women. The satrap's daughter came into the possession of `Abdullah ibn Khazim and he took her for himself and called her Misa'.

From Sarkhas, `Abdullah ibn Khazim directed Yazid ibn Salim, the slave of Sharik Al-A war to Khiva and Binah, which he opened. Kanaztik, the satrap of Tus, came to `Abdullah ibn `Amir and reconciled with him on behalf on Tus for six hundred thousand dirhams.

`Abdullah ibn `Amir sent to Harah an army led by Aus ibn Tha`labah. Having learned about this, the satrap of Harah came to `Abdullah and settled a treaty for Harah, Badghis and Bushneh. As for Taghun and Baghun, they were both opened by force.

This is what `Abdullah ibn `Amir wrote:

> In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Ever Merciful.
>
> This is what `Abdullah ibn `Amir ordered on the satrap of Bushneh and Badghis. He ordered him to fear Allah and to assist the

Muslims and to take care of the two cities under his authority. He reconciled with him on behalf of the plains and maintains of Harah, on the condition that he pays *jizyah* for those regions. This *jizyah* is to be shared by the two cities equally and the one that refuses to pay the appointed sum is out of the pact and the agreement.

The witnesses to this are Rab`i ibn Nahshal and Jathim ibn `Amir.

Shahajan, the satrap of Merv, wrote to `Abdullah ibn `Amir asking for reconciliation, so `Abdullah sent Hatim ibn Al-Nu`man Al-Bahili to him to sign an agreement with its people. The treaty stated that they were to enlarge the houses for the Muslims and to share money with them, and the Muslims were only to take small amounts. Thus, Merv was opened peacefully expect for one village called Sanh, which was opened by force.

`Abdullah ibn `Amir sent Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais to Merv Al-Ruz, which was a fort known as the fort of Ahnaf or Bashq Al-Jard. He besieged its people till they came to him asking for a treaty. He reconciled with them on the condition that one of his men enter the castle to make the *adhan* for the prayers and stay among them till Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais departed. The pact was on behalf of all of Rustaq.

Al-Ahnaf resumed his march towards Merv Al-Ruz and besieged it, but the people resisted him boldly. However, the Muslims overcame them and broke through their fortresses. The satrap, who was one of the sons of Badham, came and agreed on a *jizyah* of sixty thousand dirhams.

Later, Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais sent Al-Aqra` ibn Habis Al-Tamimi to Juzjan with some cavalry. Al-Aqra` said to his group, "O Banu Tamimi! Love one another and sacrifice for one another, then your affairs will be set rightly. Start by fighting against your stomachs and desires; thus your

religion will be right. Do not go to extremes or exaggerate; thus your fighting will be right."

Al-Aqra` then confronted his enemy boldly and vigorously. At first the Muslims were about to be defeated, but they continued struggling and overcame their enemies, opening Juzjan by force.

Al-Talqan was opened peacefully by Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais. Then he also opened Al-Fariyab Afterwards, he marched towards Balkh, a city in Talkhara and reconciled with its citizens for four hundred thousand dirhams. He assigned Arsid ibn Al-Mutshamash as governor. He resumed the advance to Khuwarizam but was unable to take it. Then Arsid ibn Al- Mutshamash returned to Balkh and collected the *jizyah*.

When `Abdullah ibn `Amir succeeded in all these openings in Khurasan, people said to him, "Allah did not grant victory to anyone before as He did to you." He said, "My thanks to Allah for this will be that I will depart in a state of ritual

consecration (*ihram*) from this very place." So `Abdullah ibn `Amir decided to perform `Umra from Nisapur and left Qais ibn Al-Haitham to govern Khurasan. He then went to Caliph `Uthman ibn `Affan.

Opening Istukhur

Istukhur was a one of the Persian lands that had many towns and villages, such as Baida', Niriz, Abarquh, Yazid and others. It also contained the treasures of the kings before Islam, and in Darabgrid, one of its villages, was found mercury. In Istukhur, when it was at its greatest, Histasib wrote the book *Zaradisht the Prophet of the Magi*. In ancient times, Istukhur was known by the name of Barsiyulis and it was the center of the Persian sovereignty and had many wells.

With the advent of Islam, the first to invade this land was Al-`Ala' ibn Al-Hadrami during the caliphate of `Umar in the year 17 A.H. Al-`Ala' went with his army by sea and landed in Istukhur.

They fought its people in a difficult battle that ended with the victory of the Persians. In the same year, Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (`Abdullah ibn Qais) entered Persia and gave the responsibility to fight Istukhur to `Uthman ibn Abi Al-`As Al-Thaqafi, who assigned the standards among his men.

The Muslims encountered the people of Istukhur in Gur and defeated them. They opened Gur, then advanced to Istukhur and killed many of its citizens while others ran away. `Uthman ibn Abi Al-`As invited them to settle a treaty and pay *jizyah,* and Al-Hurbudh, their satrap, agreed. The two parties ceased the battle in 18 A.H. or maybe later.

During the caliphate of `Uthman ibn `Affan, the people of Istukhur violated the pact and betrayed the Muslims. When `Abdullah ibn `Amir knew about the violation, he marched towards them with a huge army. They met in Istukhur and the Persians were defeated and the city was opened by force.

Afterwards, `Abdullah ibn `Amir led his army to Darabgrid, whose people had also violated the agreement. He opened it, like Gur, by force.

After Istukhur had violated the pact, `Abdullah ibn `Amir returned to it and besieged it. He fought, killing many people and destroying the majority of its houses, including the houses of some distinguished Persians who had sought refuge in it. It was said that nearly forty thousand were killed. `Abdullah ibn `Amir left Shuraik ibn Al-A`war Al- Harithi to govern Istukhur, and he was the one who built its mosque.

Opening Karman

When `Abdullah ibn `Amir went to Persia, he sent Mujashi` ibn Mas`ud Al-Salmi to Karman because its people had betrayed the Muslims and violated the agreement. Mujashi` opened Bimint by force, asked its citizens to stay, and granted

them safety for their lives and properties. He built a palace known as the Palace of Mujashi`.

Mujashi` also opened Barukharwah and went to Shirjan, a city of Karman, where he besieged its citizens in their forts for some days. Then the people came out on their horses to fight the Muslims. Mujashi` fought them fiercely till he overcame them and opened the city by force. Many people of Karman fled to the sea, some of them reached Makran, and some of them entered Sajistan. The Muslims divided their houses and lands among them. They lived there and planted, paid the *zakah* and dug many canals.

Opening Sajistan

Sajistan lay to the southwest of Afghanistan. After the murder of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the people of Sajistan and Khurasan violated the agreement with the Muslims.

When the Muslims chose Uthman ibn Affan to be the third caliph, he appointed Abdullah ibn Amir governor of Basra, so Ibn Amir headed to Khurasan. He also ordered Al-Rabi' ibn Ziyad Al-Harithi to go to Sajistan. [illegible] arrived at the fortress of Zaliq and attacked [illegible] day, [illegible] captured its chief who [illegible] a stick into the [illegible]

Al-Rabi' ibn Ziyad resumed his progress till he reached a village called Karkawayh five miles from Zaliq. Its citizens reconciled with him peacefully. Later he went to [illegible] and took a [illegible] advanced to [illegible] and defeated [illegible]

Then Ibn Ziyad went to Nashrudh and Shirwadh, two villages of Zirinj. He gained a victory and overcame them, then besieged the city of Zirinj after attacking its people. The satrap, Abirwiz, sent to him asking for a peace treaty. They agreed to a thousand Persian servants, each with a bulging long-necked bottle of gold. The Muslims then entered Zirinj.

Al Rabi` then went to a valley in Sajistan called Sanarudh Maghbarah and attacked and defeated two cities there. Afterwards, he returned to Zirinj and resided in it for two years. `Abdullah ibn `Amir then appointed over it a man of the tribe of Banu Al-Harith ibn Ka`b. Unfortunately, the people forced him out and locked the city against the Muslims.

However, `Abdullah ibn `Amir had appointed `Abdul Rahman ibn Samra ibn Habib over Sajistan, so he went and besieged Zirinj and its satrap in his palace on one of their feast days. The satrap agreed to pay large sums of money.

Ibn Samra then succeeded in overcoming the Persians in the regions between Zirinj and Kush near India, as well as on the route to Rakhaj between Persia and the land of Dawar. On reaching Dawar, he surrounded them in the mountain of Zur, then reconciled with them. He entered a temple where the idol called Zur was located. It was a goldon idol with two rubies as its eyes. He damaged its hands and took out the jewels saying to the satrap, "Take the gold and the jewels. I just wanted to prove to you that it is a thing that can do neither harm nor good." `Abdul Rahman ibn Samra opened Kabul and Azabalistan and then resided in Zirinj.

The Turks Advance to Fight the Muslims

Many Turks left the region of Khurasan. They were nearly forty thousand fighters led by their king, Qarin, aiming to fight the Muslims. They reached Tabsin, where the people of Badhghis and Harah and Qahistan gathered to support them. `Abdullah ibn Khazim was

appointed by Abdullah ibn `Amir to rule Khurasan. Thus he advanced to confront the Turks and combat them together with four thousand men telling them: "Take with you some fat."

When the Muslim army approached the Turkish army of Qarin, Abdullah ibn Khazim ordered them to [illegible] cloth or cotton over their spear tips and soak them in fat. They marched till the evening; he started with the vanguards, who were seven hundred fighters, then followed them with [illegible] saying "Light the spear tips."

The Muslim vanguard reached the camp of Qarin near midnight and attacked. The Turks were confused and enraged, for they were camping in a safe place and had no fear that anyone could reach them.

When ibn Khazim approached with his troops and the Turks saw the burning fires on the right and left, now progressing now retreating,

now raised, now lowered, they were terrified and horrified. The Muslims attacked determinedly, killing and injuring till they killed King Qarin.

The Turks were defeated and the Muslims pursued them, killing and capturing. They seized many women and children. After that, `Abdullah ibn Khazim wrote to `Abdullah ibn `Amir telling him about the victory, and he was satisfied with it and ordered him to govern Khurasan.

The strategy that `Abdullah ibn Khazim used in burning the spear tips and attacking at night was the first military trick of that kind in Islamic history. `Abdullah innovated it and the enemies were terrified at the sight, and this terror and panic were the main reason for the triumph of the Muslims over the Turks in this battle.

THE OPENING
NORTHAFRICA

OPENING NORTH AFRICA

The Berbers

The Arab regions to the west of Egypt were called Al-Maghrib. These lay in North Africa - or Ifriqiyah as the Arabs called it - and the Arabs' first contact with the natives of these lands was during the caliphate of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab after the opening of Egypt between the years 22 to 26 A.H. The Arabs knew the people of Ifriqiyah as the Berbers. The Berbers consisted of two major groups, one called Al-Baranis and the other called Al-Bathar. Each group consisted of a number of tribes that varied in population.

It is obvious that these Berber groups were formed by the people who moved to North Africa during many long ancient eras. They came from Asia, Arab countries, Egypt and Europe.

When the Muslims came to open these lands, they found their people similar to their traditions,

styles of living and in some characteristics. The natives were either Christians or Pagans, with the latter the dominating belief in many regions.

Opening Tripoli

After `Amr ibn Al-`As finished opening Alexandria in 22 A.H., he marched with his army to Burqa in Libya. In Burqa, he signed a treaty with its people to pay *jizyah* and to sell whom they liked of their young ones.

When he was finished with Burqa, he went to Tripoli, which he besieged for a month but could not defeat. He was camping on the eastern side. One day, a man of the tribe of Banu Mudlaj went to hunt with seven other men to the west of the city. On their way back, they suffered from severely hot weather, so they decided to take a path along the sea. However, the city walls were not extended to the sea and the Byzantines' ships were in the harbors opposite to their houses. Al-Mudlaji and his friends discovered a passage

between the sea and the town, so they broke into the town through it crying, "Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!"

The Byzantines' only refuge was their ships, for they thought the Muslims had invaded their houses. `Amr ibn Al-`As and his troops heard the clash of swords and the tumult, so he advanced with the army and entered the town. The Byzantines fled, taking only lightweight things onto their ships.

Meanwhile, the people of the fort of Sabrah had fortified themselves against `Amr when he headed to Tripoli. When the people of Tripoli resisted him firmly, the people of Sabrah felt assured and secure. However, when Tripoli fell into `Amr's hands, he directed a huge army to Sabrah. They arrived there on a morning when the people had opened the gates and taken their cattle to breed, unaware of what had happened to Tripoli. The Muslims attacked them, broke into

the town and looted it, then returned to `Amr triumphantly.

Afterwards, `Amr ibn Al-`As opened Libdah and Sabratah and took those regions by force from the Byzantines. He then directed his brigades and detachments in many raid inland to force the tribes to yield and to explore the land towards Tunisia.

`Amr wrote to `Umar ibn Al-Khattab telling him about his achievements and asking for permission to resume the planned advance. But `Umar refused to allow him to expand further, saying, "No, for Africa is deceiving." The Arabs had a plan to advance and push into North Africa, and they had sufficient information about the land and its inhabitants.

When `Umar died and the Muslims consented to the caliphate of `Uthman ibn `Affan, `Uthman dismissed `Amr ibn Al-`As from governing Egypt and appointed `Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh.

`Uthman Gives Permission to Proceed

`Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Sarh was one of the soldiers of Egypt who was in charge of the money of its tributes. In 25 A.H., `Uthman ibn `Affan ordered `Amr to direct `Abdullah to the borders of Ifriqiyah. When he launched his plan, `Amr reinforced him with an army, and they had lots of spoils. When `Abdullah ibn Sa`d returned, he wrote to his foster brother, `Uthman ibn `Affan, asking for permission to invade Ifriqiyah. `Uthman granted permission and said, "If Allah grants you victory your share of the spoils will be one fifth of the fifth."

He ordered `Abdullah ibn Nafi` ibn Abdul Qais and `Abdullah ibn Nafi` ibn Al-Harith to head an army and sent them to Egypt, commanding them to join `Abdullah ibn Sa`d in his mission in Ifriqiyah, so they proceeded till they crossed the Egyptian lands.

`Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Sarh, the governor of Egypt and part of Al-Maghrib, sent some troops on horseback to Ifriqiyah. The detachments gained some spoils and explored the land and people. When the expedition had fulfilled its objectives, `Abdullah sent to `Uthman for permission to invade Ifriqiyah and asked for reinforcements. North Africa at that time was under the control of the Byzantines.

The Commander of the Faithful, `Uthman ibn `Affan, reinforced `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Sarh with a distinguished army that included many of the best fighters and Companions and their sons, such as `Abdullah ibn `Umar, `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, `Abdullah ibn Ja`far ibn Abi Talib, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussain (the grandsons of the Prophet) as well as Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, Ma`bid ibn Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul Muttalib, `Abdul Rahman ibn Abi Bakr and many other men.

`Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh marched with his army till they reached Burqa, where they met `Uqbah ibn Nafi` and his troops. Then they resumed the march to Tripoli in an army of forty thousand men. They captured the Byzantines who were there, then marched to the north of Ifriqiyah and the detachments were sent everywhere.

The king of the north of Ifriqiyah at that time was Jurjir and his kingdom was from Tripoli to Tanja. He was appointed by Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, and had to give him tribute every year. Jurjir was a general of the army of the Byzantine Emperor, but he revolted against him and declared his independence and took the city of Subaitilah, which lay seventy miles from Qairawan, as his capital. It was a well-fortified city.

When King Jurjir knew about the Muslim's designs, he mobilized his army and gathered soldiers from the Berber tribes who were natives of the land. His army had about a hundred and

twenty thousand men. The two armies encountered in a place that was a day-and-a-half distance from Subaitilah. The Muslim army fought every day in the morning from sunrise to noon. `Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh sent to King Jurjir asking him to embrace Islam or pay *jizyah,* but he refused both suggestions.

`Uthman sends `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair

When the news of the army was cut from `Uthman, he sent `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair with some men to see what was wrong with `Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh and his army.

Ibn Al-Zubair marched steadily day and night till he reached them. When he and his party arrived, the other Muslims rejoiced and cried, "Allahu Akbar!"

King Jurjir was astonished by the tumult and asked, "What happened?"

He was answered, "They had some reinforcements sent to them."

This information terrified Jurjir. The disturbance and worries put an end to his stamina and enthusiasm.

When Ibn Al-Zubair arrived, he did not see `Abdullah ibn Sa`d, so he asked "Where is Ibn Abi Sarh?"

He was answered, "He heard the King's crier say that the one who kills `Abdullah ibn Sa`d will get a hundred thousand dinars and marry the king's daughter, so he is worried about himself."

`Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair went to `Abdullah ibn Sa`d in his tent and said, "Order an announcement to be made: He who brings me the head of Jurjir will be given a hundred thousand dinars and will be married to his daughter and will rule his land." So he did, and King Jurjir was more afraid than `Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh.

When `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair observed that the two armies fought from morning till midday, he said to `Abdullah ibn Sa`d, "If the fight continues in that fashion, it will take us a long time, for they have reinforcements coming in turn, and they are in their own land, while we are cut off from the Muslims."

`Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh asked, "What do you suggest?"

Ibn Al-Zubair said, "I suggest that tomorrow we leave a good group of the boldest Muslims ready in their tents while we go to fight the Byzantines with the rest of the army till they are fed up and bored. When they and the Muslims return to their camps, the Muslims who stayed resting in their camps and did not fight will have their turn to take the Byzantines by surprise. Thus may Allah grant us victory over them."

`Abdullah ibn Sa`d said, "Do you mean dividing the army into two parts, one part to fight and the other to have some rest?"

Al-Zubair replied, "Exactly."

`Abdullah ibn Sa`d consulted with the wisest of the Companions, and they agreed to Al-Zubair's plan.

The next day, `Abdullah ibn Al Zubair executed the plan and made all the boldest of the Muslims rest in their tents with their horses present with them and ready to go. The other group of the Muslims went to fight the Byzantines fiercely till noon.

When the *adhan* for Zhuhr Prayer was made, the Byzantines started to retreat and cease the battle, as they were accustomed to do every day. `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair forbade them and provoked them to fight till they were exhausted.

Subsequently, he retreated with his group and both armies dropped their arms out of fatigue.

As soon as the Byzantines were completely exhausted, `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair brought the boldest Muslims and their most distinguished heroes and dashed towards the Byzantines, who did not notice their coming until they mingled with them and attacked, crying, "Allahu Akbar!" The Byzantines were confused and unable to arm themselves, and the Muslims assaulted them and defeated them completely. The Muslim victory over them enabled them to take countless spoils.

`Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair captured King Jurjir, who was injured, and his daughter.

`Abdullah ibn `Abbas talked to Jurjir, who admired his knowledge and logic. Jurjir said to him, "You alone deserve to be the Learned Man of the Arabs." Thus, King Jurjir was the first to call `Abdullah ibn `Abbas with the title "the Learned

Man of the Arabs." Then Jurjir died of his wounds.

Afterwards, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Sarh sent detachments through the lands till they reached a small town called Qafsah, which was a three days' march from Qairawan. The people of the city took shelter in a fortress called Ajam, but Ibn Sa`d besieged it and opened it peacefully by a treaty with the natives to pay large amounts of money. He reconciled with the Byzantines on the condition that they pay three hundred quintals of gold, and in return he was to depart their land and stop fighting them. `Abdullah ibn Sa`d sent the glad tidings of victory to `Uthman ibn `Affan in the year 27 A.H.

It was said that Jurjir's daughter - who fought with her father and was a good horseback rider and knew how to use swords and weapons - was among the loot of `Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair, who returned to `Uthman bearing the good news of the opening.

It was also said that she was among the loot of a man of the Ansar. He put her on a camel and led her, chanting on how her destiny had changed.

`Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh returned to Egypt after he had stayed in Ifriqiyah for a year and three months. He sent a fifth of the spoils to Madinah, but it was bought by Marwan ibn Al-Hakam for five hundred thousand dinars. `Uthman then took it from him, and this was considered a mistake of his. It was also claimed that `Uthman ibn `Affan, the Commander of the Faithful, gave one fifth of the spoils to `Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh or to Marwan ibn Al-Hakam.

African Breaks the Agreement and Is Opened Again

When the caliphate to Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, he appointed `Amr ibn Al-`As to rule Egypt, so `Amr resumed his designs to open Ifriqiyah.

In the year 41 A.H., `Amr ibn Al-`As appointed his cousin `Uqbah ibn Nafi` Al-Fahri to rule Ifriqiyah. Consequently, `Uqbah launched many raids into Ifriqiyah for three consecutive years.

In 44 A.H., `Amr ibn Al-`As ibn Wa'il Al-Sahmi died.

Heraclius, the king of Constantinople, forced every Christian king to pay tribute to him from Egypt, North Africa, Andalusia and other places. When the Africans had a treaty with `Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh, Heraclius sent one of his patriarchs ordering him to collect in taxes as much as they gave the Muslims. The patriarch resided in Qirtaja and gathered the North Africans and told them the orders of King Heraclius. The Africans refused and said, "We pay to the Muslims what he used to take from us. He should pardon us for what the Muslims have taken from us."

After the death of King Jurjir, another Byzantine succeeded him. The patriarch banished this man after some conflicts. The banished ruler went to Al-Sham, where he met Caliph Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. He described the situation in North Africa for him and asked him to send an army with him to restore it. Mu`awiyah agreed and sent Mu`awiyah ibn Khadij Al-Sakuni. When they arrived at Alexandria, the Byzantine man died, but Mu`awiyah ibn Khadij resumed the march to Ifriqiyah and advanced to Burqa and Tripoli.

When Mu`awiyah ibn Khadij explored in an area near Qairawan, he learned that a Byzantine campaign had landed between Safaqis and Susa in an area known for its coast and massive olive trees. Fortunately, he succeeded to defeat the Byzantines and opened some territories.

The patriarch sent an army of thirty thousand fighters, but Mu`awiyah sent forth an army that defeated the Byzantines and besieged the castle of

Jalula', but they could not overcome it. Later, the walls of the fort collapsed and the Muslims looted what was in it. After that, Mu`awiyah sent his brigades to raid inside Ifriqiyah for more than a year. The Africans, thus, were obedient and helpless. Then Mu`awiyah returned to Egypt.

Establishing Qairawan

In the year 50 A.H., Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan sent `Uqbah ibn Nafi` to North Africa. He planned to build and establish Qairawan, the first Islamic city in Tunisia. `Uqbah resided in Qairawan for three years.

The establishment of Qairawan had a great influence in the region. He planned it to be the capital of the region in Al-Maghrib, a center of the army, and an advanced Arab base from which to send the army to further victories. He wanted it to be a center to spread Islam and the Arabic influence in the land and among the people.

It was said that when `Uqbah witnessed the completion of the building of Qairawan, he gathered his army, took a tour round it and prayed, "O Allah, enrich it with knowledge and religion. Fill it with Your servants and devotees, and let it be a source of honor for Your religion and a source of humiliation for those who disbelieve in You. O Allah, grant power to Islam through it and guard it against the tyrants of the earth."

The Death of `Uqbah ibn Nafi`

`Uqbah intended to depart, so he sent back the majority of his soldiers and generals together with the spoils and stayed behind with a small army. He had one of the chiefs of the Berbers called Kasilah with him, but he succeeded to escape and mustered his tribe and allied with the Byzantines.

When `Uqbah ibn Nafi` approached Qairawan he managed to reach Tahudah, but

Kasilah surrounded him, thus enabling Kasilah to block the way before `Uqbah.

Near the city of Tahudah `Uqbah suddenly found himself facing a large group. He did not hesitate to engage with them in a fatal battle, and he fell as a martyr. He was buried in Tahuda and later on, the city was renamed Sidi `Uqbah (Master `Uqbah) after him.

The Collapse of Qairawan

Kasilah and his group succeeded in entering Qairawan and subjugating it. The death of `Uqbah ibn Nafi` occurred at the same time as the death of Yazid ibn Mu`awiyah, and this resulted in the civil wars of Ash-Sham.

`Abdul Malik ibn Marwan tries to restore Qairawan

When the caliphate passed to `Abdul Malik ibn Marwan, he sent quickly to Zuhair ibn Qais Al-Balwi, `Uqbah's deputy, who had withdrawn

from Qairawan and stationed himself in Burqah. `Abdul Malik ordered him to march with his cavalry to save Qairawan and its Muslims and return it. Zuhair ibn Qais wrote to `Abdul Malik informing him of the large numbers of people and supporters of Kasilah among the Berbers and Byzantines and asked him to reinforce him with men and money.

`Abdul Malik comprehended the situation and asked his brother `Abdul `Aziz ibn Marwan, the governor of Egypt, to send to Zuhair the distinguished armies of Ash-Sham supplied with much money. This was in the year 69 A.H.

Zuhair advanced towards Qairawan and when he approached it, Kasilah withdrew and camped in a place called Hamsh, which was one day's travel from Qairawan.

The two armies fought in Hamsh in a bold struggle. Many men were killed on both sides till the people despaired of life. Allah assured His

army and they were patient till Kasilah was killed and, consequently, his party was defeated. Zuhair's army pursued the routed troops of Kasilah. Afterwards, Al-Maghrib territories lived peacefully till the year 71 A.H., and then Zuhair returned eastwards.

The Death of Zuhair ibn Qais Al-Balwi

The Byzantines took advantage of Zuhair's departure and absence by landing some troops, which raided in Burqa and other areas. They captured many Muslims and plundered their money. The Muslims sent to Zuhair for help and he responded at once, telling his fellows, "Let's go to them. May Allah be merciful to us."

They went and encountered huge numbers of Byzantines. The enemy struggled desperately and killed all the Muslims, including Zuhair ibn Qais and his group.

When the grievous tidings of the death of Zuhair and his group were carried to `Abdul Malik ibn Marwan, who was having conflicts with Zuhair, he was shaken by misery and agonized as when `Uqbah was killed.

The Soothsayer

After the conflict between `Abdul Malik ibn Marwan and `Abdullah ibn Zubair came to an end and the caliphate was given to `Abdul Malik, he directed his efforts to the territories of Al-Maghrib. He mobilized a huge army under Hassan ibn Al-Nu`man Al-Ghassani, who marched to Egypt and from there resumed his advance to Tripoli, then to Qurtajanah. He was determined to put an end to the Byzantine power in Al-Maghrib areas. By abolishing their military, it would be easy to fight, for nothing would be left except the Berber forces.

Hassan ibn Al-Nu`man Al-Ghassani succeeded in overcoming the troops of Qurtajanah

after a number of grave encounters, and thus all areas of Al-Maghrib yielded to him. However, he had some information about an alliance among the tribe of Uras led by a woman known as The Soothsayer.

Hassan's army fought with the army of The Soothsayer, but he was defeated and withdrew to Tripoli, where he resided for five years. When huge reinforcements reached him from Al-Sham, Hassan resumed the struggle against the army of The Soothsayer. But this time, Allah the Most Powerful granted victory to His servants and The Soothsayer and the majority of her army were killed. The rest of the Berber tribes fled, and so the Maghrib territories were for the Arabs, and many of the natives embraced Islam. The land enjoyed a life of peace and stability and the Muslims organized its affairs and arranged its government.

The Dismissal of Hassan and Appointment of Musa

`Abdul Aziz ibn Marwan, the brother of Caliph `Abdul Malik ibn Marwan and the father of the pious caliph `Umar ibn `Abdul Aziz, managed to dismiss Hassan and appoint Musa ibn Nussair instead. This was in 84 A.H.

When Musa ibn Nussair took over after Hassan, it was a decisive event in the history of Al-Maghrib. This was because Musa energized the military action and drove it to the extremes of Maghribi territories. Musa's strategy enabled him to have the obedience of all the tribes that accepted to Islam. He also succeeded in purging the area of all the gangs, cells and brigades of the Byzantine or Berber resistance in all the cities and forts.

Musa's progress was not within his territory only, but some of his troops raided on the coasts of Cyprus and the Iberian Peninsula. After Musa

was assured of the submission of the area and the spoils of money, loot and captives, he started to scheme for a new conquest, which was later known as the opening of Andalus.

THE OPENING
OF CYPRUS

OPENING CYPRUS

Cyprus was opened in the year 28 A.H. by Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan during the caliphate of `Uthman ibn `Affan. Some said it was in the year 23 or 33.

Another narration stated that it was opened in the year 33 because its people violated their treaty, so the Muslims invaded it. In this year, when Mu`awiyah invaded it, he was accompanied by many Companions such as Abu Dhar Al-Ghaffari, `Ubadah ibn Al-Samit and his wife Umm Hiram ibn Malhan, Abul Darda' and Shaddad ibn Aus.

Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan had asked `Umar ibn Al-Khattab several times to allow him to invade the Mediterranean and cross it to Cyprus. He told him the Byzantine lands were not far from Homs. "There is a place in Homs from which can be heard the barking of the Byzantine dogs and the crowing of their chickens."

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab wrote to `Amr ibn Al-`As, "Describe to me this sea and the conditions facing the one who wants to cross it." `Amr wrote "I saw a huge creature embarked by a minor creature. Nothing surrounds you except the sky and the water. If the sea is calm, the hearts are agitated and if it runs high the minds are anxious. Certainty in it becomes more uncertain and doubt is aroused. People in the sea are like worms clinging to a stick. If it tilts they are drowned and if they survive they are delighted."

When `Umar read the message, he wrote to Mu`awiyah "I swear by Him Who sent Muhammad with the Truth, I will never launch a Muslim in it. I had some information that the sea of Al-Sham overlooks the longest and vastest piece of land and every day and night it asks Allah to drown the land. How, then, am I to let the armies embark on this dangerous creature? By Allah, one Muslim is more precious to me than the treasures of Rome. Don't you ever disobey me, for

you know how `Ala' was punished by me." (Al-`Ala' ibn Al-Hadrami was the governor of Bahrain and asked `Umar to allow him to open part of Persia through Bahrain. `Umar forbade him due to his fears and worries about the Muslims. However, `Ala' disobeyed and headed with his army to Persia, where the Persians burned his ships and besieged him. He was about to be ruined but for the help of Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas and `Utbah ibn Ghazwan, the ruler of Basra. They reinforced him with some armies that defeated the Persians and saved Al-`Ala' and his company from Bahrain. `Umar was furious with him, dismissed him from office and punished him.)

The Byzantine king wrote to the Commander of the Faithful, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, trying to befriend him and his wife, Umm Kulthum bint `Ali ibn Abi Talib. Umm Kulthum sent some perfumes and a feminine gift to the king's wife with the messenger. The messenger delivered it to

the king's wife, who prepared a gift in return to Umm Kulthum, including a precious necklace.

When the messenger returned, `Umar took what was with him and announced, "Gather for prayers," and the Muslims gathered. `Umar told them about gifts exchanged between the two ladies.

Some said, "She (the caliph's wife) deserves it in exchange for her present, and the wife of the Byzantine king is not under a treaty to flatter or bribe you."

Others said, "We used to give presents in order to benefit."

However, `Umar said, "But the messenger is the messenger of the Muslims and the mail is theirs and the Muslims will not be content." So `Umar ordered the present of the Byzantine lady to be given to the treasury and gave Umm Kulthum a compensation for the gift she sent.

When it was the caliphate of `Uthman ibn `Affan, his cousin Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan wrote to him asking for permission to invade by sea. He repeated the demand several times and his persistence forced `Uthman to answer him, "Do not choose the people yourself and do not force them. Give them the freedom to choose. He who willingly chooses to raid, mobilize him, and support him."

Mu`awiyah did what `Uthman commanded. He charged `Abdullah ibn Qais Al-Jasi, one of the Ansar of Banu Fazara to lead the army. The Muslims set out from Al-Sham to Cyprus. From Egypt, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Sarh set out also, and they joined forces. The people of Cyprus entered into a covenant with them to pay an annual *jizyah* of seven thousand dinars. They were to pay the same amount to the Byzantines, and the Muslims did not forbid them from that commitment. The Muslims were not obliged to defend them against their enemies that were

behind them. The people of Cyprus were obliged to inform them about the advance or plans of their Byzantine enemy, and the Muslims were to attack the Byzantines by land.

Jubair ibn Nufair said, "When Cyprus was opened and the captives were seized, I looked at Abul Darda' (the Prophet ﷺ called him the wise man of this nation) and found he was crying. I asked him, "Why do you cry on such a day on which Allah has granted victory and honor to Islam and to the Muslims?" The wise man of the nation put his hand on Jubair's shoulder and said, "How trivial the creatures become to Allah when they ignore His orders! This nation was a mighty and great nation that had power, but they violated the orders of Allah, and thus they were degraded to the conditions you see. Allah imposed captivity on them and whenever Allah imposes such a fate as captivity on any people, this means that He did not care about them."

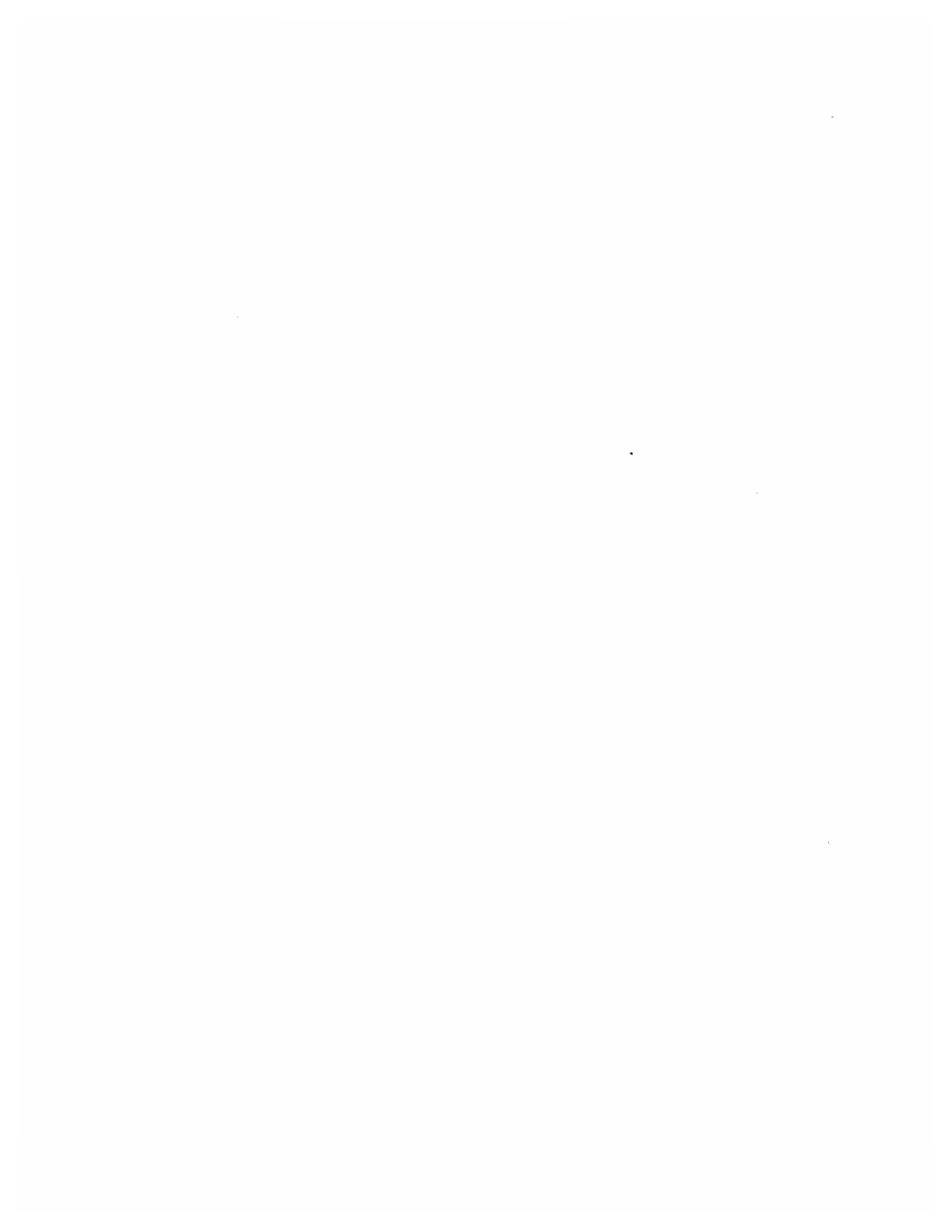
In this battle, Umm Hiram bint Malhan, the wife of `Ubadah ibn Al-Samit died when her mule threw her off its back in Cyprus and her neck was broken. She died to fulfill what the Prophet ﷺ told her about being among the first to invade by the sea and that she would be a martyr.

`Abdullah ibn Qais Al-Jasi remained in charge of the navy and had about fifty battles and invasions between Shatiyah and Sa'ifah by land and sea. None of his army drowned or failed, for he used to pay to Allah to secure his army and Allah the Almighty answered his plea.

When Allah destined to hurt his body, He let him go in a boat, and `Abdullah landed in a harbor in the Byzantine lands. There were some poor people begging at the harbor, and `Abdullah gave generously to them. A woman returned to the town and said, "`Abdullah ibn Qais is in the harbor." The citizens hurried and attacked him, killing him and injuring the sailor accompanying

him, who survived till his fellows came and he informed them of the misfortune.

THE OPENING
CONSTANTINOPLE



OPENING CONSTANTINOPLE

Constantinople was built by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine the Great in a fortified position that was hard to attack yet easy to defend. It enjoyed a distinguished geographical location. It was built on seven hills that overlooked the sea, Europe and Asia, making it a crossroads between the east and the west and between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. It also overlooked the Sea of Marmara with its beautiful natural setting.

It was known for its moderate weather and fortified fortresses and strongholds that resisted the attacks of the Berbers, the Russians and Bulgars. It was also a difficult object for the invading Arabs, Persians and others.

The Muslims Aim to Have Constntinople

Opening Constantinople was a cherished ambition since they established their reign, and they tried several times before Muhammad Al-

Fatih to open it. In Damascus, Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan aimed at fighting the Byzantines and banishing them from Constantinople. Such an opening would be a gain and strengthen his caliphate. The battles round it were always grave and the Muslims were defeated badly.

In one of these campaigns, the Companion Khalid ibn Zaid, known as Abu Aiyub Al-Ansari, in whose house the Prophet ﷺ resided when he first came to Madinah, died and was buried there under the fortified walls of Constantinople.

The second trial to open this city was during the caliphate of Sulaiman ibn `Abdul Malik. Al-Walid ibn `Abdul Malik launched a well-supplied campaign to open it by land or sea. However, both schemes were doomed to failure. Later on, the caliph Muslimah ibn `Abdul Malik launched a campaign by land and sea to attack Constantinople, but he failed as had his ancestors.

When the Abbasside dynasty took over, they were occupied with inhabiting the houses of the Byzantines rather than fighting against them and opening their city. When the `Uthmanides came to the caliphate, they made their first trial. They besieged the city and tried to open it at the hands of Sultan Bayazid I. However, he was forced to lift the siege when he knew that the Tartars had invaded his city. Later, Sultan Murad II besieged it, but withdrew because his naval force was too weak and his arrangements insufficient. In the year 1452 C.E., Sultan Murad II died and was succeeded by Sultan Muhammad II, who, though only 22 years old, dreamed of opening Constantinople.

Siege of Constantinople

Sultan Muhammad II managed to surround the city. He built a fort opposite the one that had been built by Sultan Bayazid I and another one to face the first. The two strongholds, Anaduli Hisar and Rumilia Hisar, enabled the Sultan's armies to

completely secure the Bosporus Strait and the entrance of the Black Sea. Sultan Muhammad II equipped his fort with firearms, cannons, arms and ammunition. He also had full control over the Sea of Marmara and the naval passages. The fortresses enabled him to control the Sea of Marmara and overlook the sea routes leading to the city from the north and west. Thus, Constantinople was deprived of any military reinforcements or other help from any place. The Byzantines who lived in the city and its citizens were dismayed by existence of the forts.

Sultan Muhammad II stationed the best and boldest men his army to guard the fort under the command of Fairuz Agha. He ordered him to prevent any ship from passing through the Strait of Bosporus without paying a heavy tax. He supplied the fortress with powerful cannons and mortars to force the respect of his orders.

An Expedition

Sultan Muhammad II came with his army, then ordered fifty thousand soldiers to camp near the walls of Constantinople, while he returned to Adirnah. The Byzantines did not attack them. The reason for the Sultan's quick expedition - which was only three days - was to investigate and observe the conditions of the city and study its walls and towers. He worked hard to prevent the Emperor's two brothers from sending any reinforcements to him.

To protect the rear of his army, the Sultan seized all the remaining castles in Taraqia and also occupied all the cities on the Black Sea and Sea of Marmara. His army spread all over the suburbs of the capital and the citizens were dismayed and completely disturbed.

Meanwhile, Emperor Constantine and some of his knights were fortifying the city and preparing all the means of defense to defend it as

well as they could. They repaired the broken walls, which were ancient and damaged by the raids and campaigns of successive ages. They gathered weapons and ammunition as fast as possible, as well as sufficient supplies. In addition, they sent messengers calling for the help of Europe, asking for food, arms and reinforcements. They were lamenting the destiny of Christianity in each and every Christian land which once enjoyed power.

The Reinforcements Reach the Emperor

Sultan Muhammad II devoted himself to arranging his army to attack Constantinople. He gathered a huge army of a quarter million fighters and assembled an immense fleet. In addition, he filled his forts with arms and ammunition to open this big city. The Muslims and the Byzantines spent all winter mustering their forces and scheming.

Two ships of reinforcements coming from Venice managed to cross the Bosporus with difficulty and succeeded in reaching Constantinople, but they were powerless aids.

John Justiniani of Genoa, Italy arrived on a ship loaded with ammunitions and arms and accompanying another ship with five hundred soldiers on board. The total number of fighters on the two ships was seven hundred fighters. The Emperor received them respectfully and assigned him as a general of the land forces.

The citizens of the city increased the depth of the trenches on the eastern side. The Emperor motivated his army and gave them confidence, arousing their enthusiasm and zeal. He assigned to John Justiani and his men the responsibility of defending the critical positions and important gates.

Sultan Muhammad Prepares His Army to Attack

The `Uthmanide Muslim army positioned itself at the walls of Constantinople blessed by prayers of the scholars and the honorable members of the family of the Prophet. The army was perfectly organized. The brigades were positioned beside each other with standards raised and the sounds of drums and horns echoing loudly. There were also cavalry and fourteen batteries of cannon totaling sixty-two cannons.

The pavilion of Sultan Muhammad II was erected on the left side of the Likus Valley. It was surrounded by ditches and faced the Gate of Saint Romanus. The powerful, far-reaching cannons were directed to the gate. The Sultan faced the Qiblah and prayed two *rak`ahs*, and all the army followed him.

He made the brigades of Anatolia, who were the majority, position themselves on the right of

the pavilion to the Sea of Marmara. The European brigades were in the north of these brigades and on his left side to the Golden Horn. The Sultan's guards surrounded him and were responsible for the attack at the side of the Gate of Saint Romanus, for it was the weakest point in the defense.

The Muslim army approached the walls and the Sultan asked Emperor Constantine to surrender the city to them, promising him to respect the lives and property of its citizens. He did so to prevent bloodshed and to be merciful. However, the Emperor stubbornly refused. Sultan Muhammad had no other choice but to fight.

He organized the leadership of his army as follows. The general Arghanus, who was of Albanian origin and had embraced Islam, was over the irregular army at the heights of Birah. This irregular army was to watch the inhabitants of Ghalta, who were Genoese, and to prevent any reinforcements from reaching them.

He also assigned General Sarijah Pasha over the march and his duty was to attack the city from the top of the Golden Horn. Ishaq Pasha and Mahmud Pasha were responsible for leading the Asian soldiers of Anatolia. Both generals were known for their distinguished and peerless experience in wars. The Sultan himself and Khalil Pasha led the center of the army.

The Sultan's fleet consisted of nearly three hundred ships. Though not a small number, they were still not to be compared with the number and power of their enemies. The fleet's mission was to block any supplies or reinforcements from reaching the Emperor's army as well as to attack the Christian ships that blockaded the Golden Horn. In addition to this, the fleet besieged Constantinople together with the troops on land.

Behind the walls of Constantinople and behind the gate of Saint Romanus, eight thousand denizens stood to defend their city against the Muslims. The most important group of Byzantine

defenders was that of the foreigners, which consisted of three thousand defenders belonging to Genoa, Venice, Crete, Rhodes and Spain, in addition to some mercenaries.

The Emperor camped and concentrated his troops at the side of the valley of Likus at the gate of Saint Romanus, which was the weakest point in the walls.

He held war councils to organize the defense and charged John Justintiani to defend this area. Their cannons and mortars were not powerful and they were unable to put them on the ancient walls, which were weak and ready to collapse if any cannon were put on them.

The Turkish Muslims spread out their powerful cannons before the towers and attacked the city and bombarded its walls with shells weighing two hundred *ratl*. They triggered their mortars enthusiastically.

At the beginning there were some scrimmages by the irregular army. They broke through the battlefield like bold lions facing death and enduring all kinds of danger and hardships, rushing to attack. Thus, the encircled Byzantines were unable to rest for a second due to these continuous attacks and the threatened naval attack that was expected from the Golden Horn.

Sultan Muhammad II determined to focus the assault on the gates of Saint Romanus. The Muslims attacked the walls overlooking the Gulf of the Golden Horn, but it was in vain. They also tried to dig under the walls and they succeeded to a certain extent but for the resistance of the Byzantines. The efforts of the Muslims caused the inhabitants to be worried and terrified and unable to sleep for fear that the Muslims would break through the city every night by such strategy.

Lastly, Sultan Muhammad built a quick movable siege engine in front of the walls, horrifying the hearts of the besieged inhabitants.

This movable fort was designed to resist flames and at the same time it hit all the firearms in the city, jeopardizing the defenders. The fort also succeeded in collapsing four towers and thus filling in the trenches. This enabled the Muslims to launch a great attack from the side of the gate of Saint Romanus. However, they were forced to withdraw by the desperate resistance of the Byzantines, and their swift movable fort was ruined completely.

Constantine Unable to Surrender the City

Despair never knew its way to the heart of Sultan Muhammad II, so he resumed scheming his strategies. He focused the assault of the powerful cannons in three positions, the Gate of Edirne, the Gate of Saint Romanus, and the military gate. He sent his messenger, Isma`il Hamzah Asfindyar Aughli, with a message to Emperor Constantine: resuming the war was of no avail, for the city would be defeated by force. It would be captured, its men would be killed, and the women and

children would be captives or sold in the markets. The sultan suggested that the emperor leave the city with his family, attendants and any of the citizens. His departure would be granted peacefully, and the sultan promised to protect and preserve the lives and properties of all the natives. Thus, all that Constantine had to do was surrender the city.

However, the emperor replied, "I have no authority that gives me the right to surrender the city, even if it costs me my soul."

Opening the Great City

After Emperor Constantine refused to surrender, Sultan Muhammad's only option was to open it by force. He held his war council on 27 May 1453 C.E. in his camp opposing the walls. He took council with his generals, and they were of two viewpoints. One was that there was no need to exert such great effort and all these military operations on the besieged city, for it

would surrender sooner or later. It would be useful to leave the city as it was so that the Muslims could increase in power and zeal, and at the same time the defenders would be frustrated and completely exhausted. Thus, the city would be an easy prey.

The second viewpoint advised the army to endure patiently, to strengthen its stamina and attack. This viewpoint was accepted by the senior officers, including the sultan himself.

On the morning of 27 May, the Sultan planned an all-out attack on the city. All the army fasted and prayed to Allah to grant them victory and help them to achieve their goal.

He ordered the artillery to devastate the walls at the Valley of Likus, and they did. He organized the companies that would launch the attacks so that each company would attack from a certain position, then clear the way for the next company to attack. These shifts enabled the attackers to

have some rest while their colleagues attacked the defenders, who were exhausted and worn out.

Sultan Muhammad II passed by all the divisions of the army that was besieging the city. He encouraged the troops and enkindled their souls with the spirit of enthusiasm and sacrifice.

The artillery attacked mercilessly and constantly. John Justiniani, the commander of the defenders, was seriously injured by the shelling and had to be carried into the city.

The Sultan arranged his army in a unique style and delivered a speech in which he said that through strong will, honest determination, immediate obedience in executing orders and obeying the leadership, victory could be achieved by the will of Allah the Almighty.

In the deep prevailing darkness, the Muslims crept closer to the walls. The `Uthmani fleet proceeded and occupied the positions planned for

it and launched a fierce attack on many locations. Yet, the main attack was by the Valley of Likus. During the attacks, the Muslims cried, "Allahu Akbar!" and their voices were raised with their prayers to Allah to grant them victory.

The noise and tumult was mingled among the attackers and the defenders. The Muslims succeeded in opening a gap and attacked the outer wall. Their assault was like a blasting storm. When the sultan realized that the lines of the defenders were disordered as planned, he forced his janissary fighters, who had not yet shared in the battle, to march towards the Likus Valley like fierce lions. They were resisted by defenders exhausted by fatigue and hunger and suffering from deep wounds. When the Muslims approached the walls, they snatched the flag of the Byzantine Emperor and the flag of Venice and raised the banners and flags of Islam.

The emperor, who was forty-nine years old, was killed and the city came under the authority

and possession of the Muslims. Forty thousand Christian Byzantines were killed in the siege and the attack. A large number of Greeks were killed and their children were taken by the Muslims to be taught the Arabic language and the Qur'an. The women were added to the harem of the Sultan and his men.

At noon, Sultan Muhammad II entered Constantinople through the Gate of Saint Romanus riding his horse in a great procession followed by his ministers, generals and soldiers. He walked in the street that led to the church, and when he reached the altar he found the priests and monks who sought refuge in it. He was kind to them and guaranteed their security. He asked the Christians present in the church to depart safely to their houses, then he had the adhan called for the prayers.

For the first time, the Sultan and the Muslims attending with him prayed in the church. The church, afterwards, became the mosque of Aya

Sufiya, which is one of the finest mosques. The Sultan sent to the leaders and governors of the Muslims everywhere on earth telling them about the great opening of Constantinople.

THE OPENINGS

SPAIN

OPENING SPAIN

The Visigoths

The Iberian Peninsula was governed by the Visigoths, who invaded it in the year 414 C.E. They dominated the northeastern area and were Christians. After a hundred years or more, they succeeded in establishing a united kingdom that dominated all the Iberian Peninsula, in addition to a small piece of land in southern France.

It is worth saying that the succeeding Visigoth kings had only weak control over the land. Because of their invading and taking the land by force, many conflicts took place between them and the natives. This resulted in the existence of the nobility that were favored by the throne. They had the responsibility to form a powerful and capable army to defend the king and the country.

Apart from the nobles were the natives of the land who were of Spanish origin. In addition, there were large numbers of farmers and others who suffered various kinds of misery and hardships in their lives. This resulted in the corruption, poor conditions and injustice that prevailed in the land. Social injustice was a daily complaint because of the exploitation of the lower ranks by the higher ones, and people grumbled about the rulers. Hostility and vengeance spread between the various categories of people.

The disunity of the people was increased by the struggle for the throne. Some historic references mentioned that a son and his father ruled the Iberian Peninsula since 687 C.E. The son, Winza, intended to have one of his sons, Akhila, to succeed him on the throne, so he gave him a dukedom in the northeast section of the kingdom and made him the crown prince. After the death of Winza in 710 C.E., the nobles refused to accept

Akhila and chose Roderick as king from among themselves.

However, Akhila kept his dukedom and coined his own money. He considered Roderick a thief and managed to dethrone him and seize the kingdom himself. Roderick fought more than one battle against Akhila. When the Muslims landed in Spain, he was engaged in a war in the north. Some historic sources mentioned about the opening of Spain that Akhila contacted Tariq ibn Ziyad, who was camping in Tanjah with an army of twelve thousand men. The message was, "My father died and a noble patriarch called Roderick seized the throne unlawfully. I have heard about your power and I invite you to invade Spain and I will be your guide to it."

Thus, we see the divisions between the nobles. The miserable subjects who were suffering from oppression looked to the Muslims as saviors who would save them from tyranny and injustice.

The Arrangements of the Opening

After Hassan ibn Al-Nu`man Al-Ghassani overcame the rebellion of The Soothsayer, he had authority over all the land of Ifriqiyah (North Africa). And when Musa ibn Nusair took over, he resumed the military operations in Ifriqiyah. He fought many campaigns that forced the entire North African coast to yield to the Muslims. He spread stability and peace all over the land, and the only city that remained beyond his authority was the Byzantine city of Sebtah, which was under the sovereignty of a Byzantine ruler called Julian. Later, he concluded a pact with the Muslim leaders on behalf of Sebtah and, thus, he retained his position and supplied the Muslims with material aid, advice and information.

In the year 91 A.H. (710 C.E.), Musa ibn Nusair won the approval of Caliph Al-Walid ibn `Abdul Malik to open Spain on the condition that there first be an exploratory operation. Musa sent Tarif ibn Malik, one of his generals, with four

hundred infantrymen and a hundred cavalrymen to raid on the coasts of the south of Spain. They embarked in six ships, which anchored near a small peninsula known now as Green Island or Tarif's Island. The raid of Tarif ibn Malik was a success and the spoils were many. They returned bearing information about the unstable conditions of the land. This motivated Musa to execute the planned opening.

The Advance towards the Opening

Musa had a Berber servant named Tariq ibn Ziyad whom he joined to his army. In 92 A.H., Musa ibn Nusair sent Tariq ibn Ziyad at the head of seven thousand fighters, most of whom were Berbers, to invade the Iberian Peninsula. Then he reinforced them with five thousand more Berbers.

Tariq ibn Ziyad crossed the sea with his army, then determined to burn the ships. It was also said that Tariq ordered the ships to return to North Africa to bring reinforcements. He

anchored near a huge mountain which still bears his name, together with the strait (Gibraltar, Jabl Tariq in Arabic).

Tariq then delivered a speech to his army: "The sea is behind you, the enemy is in front of you, and nothing is left to you except truthfulness and patience." When Tariq landed with his army in the south of Spain in Rajab 92 A.H. (April 711 C.E.), Roderick was absent with his army to establish a base in the northern part of the peninsula.

The Battle of Lake Valley

When Roderick knew about Tariq, he was furious and returned to his land, gathering a large force of nearly a hundred thousand fighters to resist Tariq. The two parties encountered in a battle called Lake Valley on 28 Ramadan 92 A.H.

The grave battle lasted for eight consecutive days. They fought seriously and many were killed

so that the people thought it was a day of perishing and no one would survive. Allah assured His pious servants, and the enemy was defeated and Tariq and his army achieved victory.

The Muslims pursued their enemies and killed Roderick. It was said that he drowned in the river in the Valley of Mud. The Muslims pounced on the backs of the enemies and killed and injured them. Although the mountain was difficult, the Muslims were quick to catch their enemies and chased them everywhere till they finished them.

Opening Cordoba

In this battle, Tariq ibn Ziyad put an end to the major military power of the Visigoths. He caused their governmental and political system to collapse in Spain. This battle was also the most difficult one in Spain, for the Muslims did not face anything similar afterwards.

Tariq camped at a spring or well that is still called after him, four miles from Istijah. Tariq realized that opening Spain had become easy and nothing stood in the way to achieving his goals. Tariq advanced towards Cordoba and opened it. Then he marched towards Toledo, the capital city and one of the most important centers. He faced some resistance but finally succeeded to open it.

Afterwards, he marched to the Valley of Rocks and crossed a mountain, reaching a city that lay behind a mountain called the City of the Table. There he found the table of Prophet Sulaiman ibn Dawud (peace be on them). It was of green emerald and its edges and legs were inlaid with pearls, corals and rubies. It had three hundred sixty erect legs.

The only remaining city was Sakasta, so he sent some exploratory troops to it.

Musa ibn Nusair opens Ishbiliyah

When Musa ibn Nusair learned about the triumph Allah had granted His servant Tariq ibn Ziyad, he moved to share in the opening. He went from Ifriqiyah to Tanjah, then crossed the sea with eighteen thousand fighters in Ramadan 93 A.H. (July 712 C.E.). He advanced with his army towards Ishbiliyah, which was one of the greatest cities of Spain in its architecture and was full of historical relics. He besieged it for months and opened it after great resistance and fierce struggle. Afterwards, he proceeded to Mardah to the north of Ishbiliyah, where the remaining Visigoth troops that had retreated were residing. He besieged it, also.

The people of Mardah came out and fought boldly against Musa ibn Nusair. Musa and his army hid from them between the rocks, so the Visigoths did not see them. In the early hours of the next day, Musa marched towards them, and, as usual, they came out to combat the Muslims. But

Musa and his troops left their hiding places and blocked the way between them and their city. They had a desperate encounter and few people survived.

Musa resumed the siege and achieved the opening on the day of `Id Al-Fitr 94 A.H. He concluded a treaty with them that stated that all the possessions of the men slain on the day of the ambush, the properties of the runaways, and the churches with their fortunes belonged to the Muslims.

Musa ibn Nusair Meets Tariq ibn Ziyad

Musa ibn Nussair departed Mardah in Shawwal 94 A.H. heading to Toledo. Tariq came out to receive him and Musa rebuked him, "Why did you invade the land before taking my permission or at least informing me?" Tariq ibn Ziyad replied, "This opening is because of you and is yours, and I am only your servant."

Musa accepted his excuses and they marched together to Toledo, where they spent the winter of that year, 713-714 C.E. They started the first organization of the lands they had opened, and Musa coined the first Arab Islamic coins in Europe.

From Toledo, Musa ibn Nusair sent a messenger to Caliph Al- Walid ibn `Abdul Malik in Damascus telling him all about the openings in Spain.

Musa and Tariq Return to Damascus

One year later, Musa ibn Ziyad marched towards Sarqasta and opened it, and from there they sent an exploratory expedition, which reached Arbona. The Visigoth kingdom encompassed lands in the southeast of France, in addition to lands on the Mediterranean. Musa then advanced with his troops and delved into the coastal area of Asturias. Tariq opened Lyon and

the town of Ashturqah. He also forced Argonne to yield.

At that time, the messenger of Caliph Al-Walid ibn `Abdul Malik arrived with an order for Musa to leave Spain and return to Damascus to meet the caliph. However, Musa delayed his departure and received another message urging him return to Damascus. Musa ibn Nusair met with Tariq ibn Ziyad, and they both returned to Caliph Al-Walid ibn `Abdul Malik.

The Reasons for the Caliph's Summons

The caliph wanted to know directly from Musa and Tariq about their victories in these lands. He also wanted to plan the future with them, as well as settle an account of the spoils and how much they used and spent of them. Perhaps the caliph felt that Musa was intending to declare his independence from the Sufyani reign, especially after he knew that Musa had appointed his son `Abdullah as governor of Ifriqiyah, his son

`Abdul Malik over Al-Maghrib, and his son `Abdul `Aziz over Ishbiliyah, from which he could rule Spain.

Musa ibn Nusair Confined

In the winter of the year 95 A.H., Musa ibn Nusair and his servant Tariq ibn Ziyad departed from Spain. This was after Musa had appointed his son `Abdul Malik to govern Al-Maghrib and his elder son `Abdullah was in charge of Ifriqiyah. Musa and Tariq were accompanied by a huge caravan carrying many fortunes, treasures and jewels. The caravan crossed Egypt and when they passed by Arish, Musa received a message from Caliph Al-Walid asking him to hasten.

Musa and his company hurried till they reached Damascus. When Musa arrived there, he gave the fortunes and all that was loaded in the caravan to the caliph. Three days later, Caliph Al-Walid died and was succeeded by his brother Sulaiman ibn `Abdul Malik, who was angry with

Musa and imprisoned him and ordered severe punishment.

It was said that Musa ibn Nusair and Tariq ibn Ziyad entered Damascus with forty princes and noblemen of the Visigoth royal family. They were crowned and accompanied by a large number of leaders and captives loaded with abundant spoils and rare treasures.

Musa and Tariq entered Damascus in the year 96 A.H. (715 C.E.).

Caliph Al-Walid ibn `Abdul Malik had ordered the greatest and most honored reception for the victorious generals in the Sufyani mosque, where hundreds of Spaniards and many captives showed their obedience to the Commander of the Faithful.

Many Years Later

Many years passed and many governors succeeded each other, for nearly twenty rulers

governed Spain after the death of `Abdul `Aziz ibn Musa ibn Nusair, who was appointed by his father before the latter departed to the caliph in Damascus.

The rule of some of those governors lasted for more than five years, and some of them were temporary until the caliph appointed someone else when his rule was short due to facing foreign wars by the vanquished Visigoths or civil wars.

Among the most famous governors were `Abdul Rahman ibn `Abdullah Al-Ghafiqi, who ruled from 112 to 114 A.H., and `Abdul Rahman ibn Mu`awiyah ibn Hashim ibn `Abdul Malik, who was later known as Al-Dakhil.

During his rule, `Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhil succeeded in overcoming the rebellions and civil conflicts that erupted continually. He also had a greater success in confronting the army of Charlemange after he and his armies crossed the Pyrenees Mountains. The Muslims defeated

Charlemange's army and many noblemen were killed. Thus, `Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhil was appreciated and highly admired by those who lived at his time, and Abu Ja`far Al-Mansur, the Abbassid caliph, called him the "Hawk of the Quraish".

After the death of `Abdul Rahman Al-Dakhil, many rulers succeeded each other till the reign of `Abdul Rahman III, who called himself "Al-Nasir", meaning The Victorious.

Al-Nasir declared himself caliph in the year 716 A.H. What prompted him to take that step was the weakness of the Abbassid government in the east and the establishment of the Fatimid caliphate in Al-Maghrib. During the first twenty years of his reign, he succeeded in uniting Spain and restoring the sovereignty of the Muslims over it.

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